

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 24, 2025

3:34 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Löki Tobin, Chair  
Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair  
Senator Jesse Kiehl  
Senator Mike Cronk

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Jesse Bjorkman

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

PRESENTATION(S) : CAPITAL NEEDS FOR SCHOOL FACILITIES

- HEARD

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 69(RLS) AM

"An Act relating to education; relating to open enrollment in public schools; relating to school and student performance reports; relating to school and district accountability; relating to charter schools; relating to an annual report for correspondence study programs; relating to the base student allocation; relating to reading proficiency incentive grants; relating to wireless telecommunications devices in public schools; relating to the duty of the legislature to pass a public education appropriation bill; relating to the duty of the governor to prepare a public education appropriation bill; establishing the Task Force on Education Funding; relating to a report on regulation of school districts; and providing for an effective date."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

LORI WEED, School Finance Manager

Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Co-presented Capital Needs for School Facilities.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[3:34:52 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Kiehl, Stevens, Cronk, and Chair Tobin.

**PRESENTATION(S) : CAPITAL NEEDS FOR SCHOOL FACILITIES**

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CHAIR TOBIN announced a presentation from the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), Capital Needs for School Facilities.

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LORI WEED, School Finance Manager, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), Juneau, Alaska, Co-presented Capital Needs for School Facilities.

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MS. WEED moved to slide 2 and shared DEED's mission, vision, and purpose statement:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**Mission, Vision, and Purpose**

Purpose

An excellent education for every student every day.

Vision

All students will succeed in their education and work, shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves, exemplify the best values of society, and be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them. - Alaska Statute 14.03.015

Purpose

DEED exists to provide information, resources, and leadership to support an excellent education for every student every day.

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MS. WEED moved to slide 3, and said the Facilities section grounds itself in DEED's Strategic Priorities:

**Strategic Priorities:  
Alaska's Education Challenge**

**Five Shared Priorities:**

1. Support all students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.
2. Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.
3. Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources.
4. Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.
5. Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and tribes.

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MS. WEED moved to slide 4, Current Funding Mechanisms, and discussed the following points:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**Current Funding Mechanisms**

1. School Construction Grant Fund (1990) AS 14.11.005
2. Major Maintenance Grant Fund (1993) AS 14.11.007
3. Regional Educational Attendance Area (REAA) and Small Municipal School District School Fund (2010) AS 14.11.030
  - Indexed Fund
  - DR Funding divided by percent of municipal schools multiplied by 0.244 AS 14.11.025
4. School Debt Reimbursement (DR) Funding AS 14.11.102

MS. WEED said:

[Original punctuation provided.]

The current funding mechanisms were established in Alaska statutes' title 14, chapter 11 and provide for the department to oversee programs for the Construction, Rehabilitation, and Improvement of Schools and Education-Related Facilities. There are two primary funds, the School Construction Grant Fund,

established in 1990, and the Major Maintenance Grant Fund, which was established 1993.

This structure simplified the appropriation and allocation system that was based on six different funding lists, one for each of the project categories identified in statute.

All grant projects funded under the chapter require a participating share from the district: 2 percent, for Regional Educational Attendance Areas (REAs) and between 5 and 35 percent for municipal school districts.

The Regional Educational Attendance Area and Small Municipal School District School Fund (which we typically shorten to the REAA Fund) was created in 2010 as a result of the Kasayulie settlement as a method of providing more equity in capital funding between rural and urban schools; primarily those who could participate in school bond debt reimbursement and those who could not. Originally specific to REAs for school construction funding, it was expanded to include small municipalities in 2013 and in 2018 the purpose was expanded to include major maintenance.

This is a calculation indexed to the amount of the state's school bond debt reimbursement, modified by a ratio of municipal schools, and a constant factor of 0.244. The current funding capitalization in the operating budget this year is about \$22.9 million.

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CHAIR TOBIN asked for clarification on the relationship between REAA funds and school bond debt. She stated her understanding that a portion of the resources allocated to REAA funds comes from school bond debt proceeds. She requested further explanation on how this relationship works.

MS. WEED explained that there is approximately a two-year lag in the funding process. She stated that the amount included in the state operating budget for municipal debt reimbursement is used in a corresponding calculation. That amount is multiplied by the ratio of municipal schools and then by a constant factor. The resulting value determines the intended capitalization of the REAA.

CHAIR TOBIN asked whether any resources have been allocated to the REAA fund during the period of the school bond debt moratorium.

MS. WEED confirmed that the statutory calculation for the REAA fund has continued during the school bond debt moratorium. She noted that in the first decade, the amount allocated was higher due to more active debt repayment. When she began working in facilities, the amount was approximately \$45 million per year. She added that the funding has gradually decreased over time.

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SENATOR STEVENS asked whether the state is current on obligations related to the Kasayulie case. He also inquired if there is an expectation of facing another lawsuit in the future.

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MS. WEED stated that from the perspective of the Facilities section at DEED, five schools were identified under the Kasayulie case, and all five have been funded. She affirmed that the department considers this obligation fulfilled. She said she could not address the possibility of a second lawsuit.

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MS. WEED discussed the last point on slide 4, School Debt Reimbursement, and said the following:

[Original punctuation provided.]

The School Bond Debt Reimbursement program is open to all Cities and Boroughs that operate school districts. Applications for a debt reimbursement project may be received at any time a Debt Reimbursement program allocation is open, or authorized. Because of the open nature of the program in recent iterations, projects are not ranked or evaluated for prioritized need; although the scope and budgets are reviewed.

The funding authorizations for the program have been approved by the legislature through statute in two methods: most recently with an open-ended authority to reimburse at set rates. Prior to the moratorium in 2015, the authorized rates for reimbursement by the state was set at 60 and 70 percent, and new rates, which are currently set to be in effect July 1, 2025, will be at 40 and 50 percent reimbursement.

A previous method of program authorization established a maximum amount of project allocation per municipal population or enrollment range. This method was primarily used between 1990 and 2006.

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MS. WEED moved to slide 5, Current Project Categories (AS 14.11.013) (School Construction and Major Maintenance), and said each project submitted to the department must fall within at least one of the identified categories below:

Current Project Categories (AS 14.11.013)  
(School Construction and **Major Maintenance**)

- (A) Avert imminent danger or correct life-threatening situations;
- (B) House students who would otherwise be unhoused; for purposes of this subparagraph, students are considered unhoused if the students attend school in temporary facilities;
- (C) Protect the structure of existing school facilities;**
- (D) Correct building code deficiencies that require major repair or rehabilitation in order for the facility to continue to be used for the educational program;**
- (E) Achieve an operating cost savings;**
- (F) Modify or rehabilitate facilities for the purpose of improving the instructional program;
- (G) Meet an educational need not specified in (A) – (F) of this paragraph, identified by the department

MS. WEED said these categories are assigned to school construction and major maintenance in AS 14.11.135. When a project is assigned a category and hence to a specific grant fund, the ranking lists for School Construction and Major Maintenance do not further distinguish between the categories of projects. Except for a limited number of questions only applicable to School Construction, all projects are ranked using the same scoring matrices. This provides a transparent framework for the department to balance the wide-ranging scopes and disparate types of projects from all across the state.

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CHAIR TOBIN referred to items currently on the project lists and asked whether the department recommends addressing a specific

number of projects each year to ensure prioritized projects receive funding. She also asked how the department determines when schools are unsafe and in urgent need of resources.

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MS. WEED explained that while the list includes numerous rankings, it does not specifically identify projects as imminent dangers. She stated that the department distributes a points list that districts can use to review scores for individual projects. She noted that reviewing the life, safety, or emergency scores within those categories may provide some indication of the identified need based on the rankings.

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CHAIR TOBIN referenced a recent news article that brought increased attention to school major maintenance issues. She noted that the article mentioned a condemned school in Sleetmute. She asked where that specific school appears on the current project list.

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MS. WEED stated that the Sleetmute project was funded last year and is no longer on the current list for that reason. She added that the district plans to submit a new application for the school's replacement, potentially next year.

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CHAIR TOBIN stated it was her understanding that the delay in funding led to the Sleetmute school now requiring full replacement. She asked if the project would become the department's top priority when the new list is released and whether the department would indicate that replacement is necessary for the school to be considered safe.

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MS. WEED stated that the department does not speculate on project rankings. She believed the application for Sleetmute would be strong and presumed it would rank near the top of the school construction list.

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SENATOR KIEHL observed that most projects on the school construction grant fund list involve straightforward school replacements or demolish-and-replace projects, with some including renovations and additions. He noted that other projects, such as security upgrades, kitchen remodels, secure vestibules, and auditorium upgrades, do not sound like new

school construction. He asked what factors cause certain projects to be placed on the school construction list rather than the major maintenance list.

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MS. WEED explained that projects like secure vestibules fall under Category F, which includes modifications or rehabilitation to improve the instructional program. Because statute does not define a specific security category, those projects are placed on the school construction list. She noted that security upgrades often involve structural changes such as moving walls and creating new spaces. She added that renovation, addition, or school replacement projects typically rank higher due to additional scoring related to unhoused students and overcrowding, which pushes them toward the top of the list.

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SENATOR KIEHL stated that the term "renovate" typically aligns with major maintenance projects. He asked how much a district can improve its program through renovation while still qualifying for a major maintenance project, rather than being shifted to the more expensive school construction list.

MS. WEED responded that a renovation alone is not necessarily less expensive than a renovation with an addition. She explained that the added cost typically comes from the additional square footage, which is also the reason those projects are placed on the school construction list.

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SENATOR KIEHL clarified that by "more expensive," he was referring to how far funding stretches. He pointed out that a quarter billion dollars places a school at number five on the school construction list, while the same amount on the major maintenance list is number 81. He noted that funding school construction projects means taking smaller bites. He added that some older schools eventually require full renovations due to outdated plumbing, wiring, and structural issues. He asked whether moving a wall between classrooms to accommodate changing educational needs could shift a project from maintenance to school construction.

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MS. WEED asked Senator Kiehl to repeat the question.

SENATOR KIEHL asked how much flexibility exists when renovating a structure to update its functionality before a project is

reclassified as new school construction. He expressed concern that once a project moves to the school construction list, its chances of being funded significantly decrease.

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MS. WEED explained that the classification often involves interpretation, and the department typically considers the cost breakdown. She stated that if more than 50 percent of the budget is allocated to altering space, such as moving walls, rather than replacing existing systems, the project may be categorized as school construction.

SENATOR KIEHL expressed appreciation for the general rule of thumb.

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SENATOR STEVENS asked for an explanation of the application process. He noted that some small districts report being unable to afford the process, which he described as expensive. He asked whether districts are responsible for funding the application, including hiring experts, and whether the department assists in preparing applications.

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MS. WEED stated that districts must complete certain preparatory work before undertaking a project, which often includes hiring professionals—such as engineers—for condition surveys and technical documentation. She noted that the department provides tools to assist with the application process, and districts with adequate staff and time may complete applications without incurring those additional costs. She added that all related application costs are reimbursable once the project is funded and can be counted toward the district's required participation share.

SENATOR STEVENS confirmed his understanding that application costs are reimbursable and stated that medium-sized districts like his can manage the process. He expressed concern for very small districts and asked whether some are not applying because they cannot afford the upfront costs.

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MS. WEED stated that some districts have anecdotally shared they choose not to apply because they do not see a sufficient return on investment. She explained that these districts prefer to use their limited resources elsewhere rather than spend them on an application process with uncertain funding outcomes.

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SENATOR STEVENS responded that it is concerning that some districts do not apply.

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CHAIR TOBIN noted that approximately 76 percent of schools in REAAs are state-owned. She asked for confirmation that, despite state ownership, the school district is still responsible for hiring engineers and other experts during the application process.

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MS. WEED explained that, under the use permit agreement outlined in regulation, districts have operational and management authority over state-owned properties. She stated that AS 14.11 establishes the process for districts to apply for the capital funding program.

CHAIR TOBIN asked for clarification on the term "secure vestibule" and requested a description, noting that some people may not understand what it refers to.

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MS. WEED explained that secure vestibules involve restructuring entry spaces to create safer access points. She stated that current security protocols require a secure entrance to allow staff to identify an unwanted person and lock down the school if needed. The purpose is to add an additional layer of protection for students.

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CHAIR TOBIN responded that the [changes to school vestibules] are a best practices effort to prevent school shootings.

SENATOR STEVENS recalled serving on a House committee years ago when concerns were raised about the lack of standardized school design. He noted that schools were individually designed regardless of cost. He asked whether the state has implemented a standard school design to be used across districts.

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MS. WEED explained that the commonly used term for standardized designs is "prototype school." She said prototypes have proven effective when multiple schools are needed within a short timeframe, citing Anchorage and Fairbanks as examples where prototype schools have been used. She mentioned that schools

built following the Molly Hootch case may have had similar, though not necessarily identical, designs. She referenced a 2016 legislative study on prototyping, available on DEED's website under the Facilities section. The study concluded that Alaska's diverse conditions, such as climate, foundation needs, and site limitations, make a single standard design impractical across the state.

SENATOR STEVENS acknowledged the challenges of standardizing school designs and commented that schools built during the Molly Hootch period do look alike.

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MS. WEED moved to slide 6, Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Eligibility:

[Original punctuation provided.]

#### **Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Eligibility**

1. Six-year capital improvement plan
2. Functioning fixed asset inventory system (FAIS)
3. Proof of required property insurance
4. Certified preventive maintenance and facility management program
5. Capital project and not routine maintenance
6. Participating share

MS. WEED said that to participate in a funding program under AS 14.11, a district must meet statutory requirements, including a six-year capital improvement plan and documentation of a functioning fixed asset inventory system. A district must annually submit proof of property insurance on their facilities. To help ensure that systems are in place to adequately care for facilities, the district preventive maintenance and facility management program must have current certification by the department. Documentation ensuring that the project is a capital project and not part of routine facility maintenance must be provided, and they must acknowledge that the district is responsible for meeting a portion of the project costs.

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MS. WEED moved to slide 7, Grant Participation and Eligibility, and discussed the following points:

[Original punctuation provided.]

## Grant Participation and Eligibility

- **Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Grant Application**
  - Due from school districts on or before September 1 (annually)
  - CIP Application materials are posted on our website
  - (<https://education.alaska.gov/facilities/facilitiesscip>)
- **Project Ranking**
  - Ranked in accordance with criteria in AS 14.11 and 4 AAC 31
- **Eligibility**
  - Districts must have a six-year plan, a fixed asset inventory system, adequate
  - property loss insurance, and a preventive maintenance and facility
  - management program certified by the department
- **CIP Priority Lists**
  - Initial lists are released on November 5
  - Final lists are released after any appeals for reconsideration are finalized

MS. WEED said the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) grant applications are received by the department from districts annually on or before September 1. Over the next two months the department reviews and ranks all submitted applications. The Bond Reimbursement and Grant Review Committee has established an application and ranking matrix that has districts identify and provide standard information that is necessary for development and evaluation of a project. The application is reviewed and approved annually at publicly noticed meetings.

MS. WEED stated that the department ensures eligibility criteria are met. The department publishes the initial ranking list on November 5. Districts can review department determinations on ranking (scores), eligibility, and modifications to scope and budget. If reconsideration is not favorable to a district, they can appeal to an administrative hearing officer and decision by the State Board of Education; ultimately able to be heard and decided in the Superior Court if needed.

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MS. WEED added that the last major appeal was for the FY 2016 budget cycle, and was for the Kivalina new school construction project, which was the last of the Kasaysulie projects.

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MS. WEED moved to slide 8, What Does It Take to Fill Out an Application:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**What does it take to fill out an application?**

**Project Justification:** Clearly articulate the need for the project, including factors like facility age, condition, and enrollment projections.

**Scope of Work:** Provide a detailed description of the proposed work, including preliminary designs or schematics.

**Budget:** Present a comprehensive budget outlining all project costs and the district's participating share.

**Supporting Documentation:** Include educational specifications, facility condition surveys, and any other relevant assessments.

MS. WEED said:

[Original punctuation provided.]

The application prompts, and rewards through scoring, districts to provide information needed for evaluation of the project scope and necessity, by both the district and the department. This includes existing facility information like age and conditions, and an evaluation of options. For new construction it should include enrollment projections to justify the space increase.

Scope of work is established through narrative and can be supported by preliminary design documents. An estimate of the budget is essential. Documentation that supports the statements in the application provides assurance of accuracy and allows the department to more accurately evaluate the project presented.

The department provides publications and tools for districts to complete the application without professional assistance. These tools can walk a district through completing elements of the application, including options costing analysis, a condition survey, population projections, and budgeting tool.

In addition to always being available to districts to answer questions during application development, Facilities staff at the department participate at statewide conferences, including those for the Alaska Association for School Business Officials and the maintenance director conference hosted by the Association of Alaska School Boards. Facilities also hosts an annual training workshop on the application and will be providing monthly question and answer sessions for districts throughout the summer leading up to the application deadline.

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MS. WEED moved to slide 9, Grant Participation and Eligibility FY 2016 - FY 2026, and shared a brief chart of the past 11 years of ranked grant projects. She pointed out a dip that occurred in FY 2019 - 2020, and explained how it was related to DEED's ability to exercise authority to reallocate the fund balance in the Major Maintenance Grant Fund and School Construction Grant Fund. She said preparing for the presentation revealed an interesting comparison. In this most recent decade (2015-2025), there was an average of 117 applications and 60 percent participation from districts. The requests were funded at approximately 16 percent. In the first decade of the current program structure (1994-2004) there was an average of 178 applications and 83 percent participation by districts. The state was able to fund 25 percent of those requests. Needs are not less now, but the ability to receive grant funding has been less certain. She said to also consider that there were active debt reimbursement authorizations during that first decade.

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SENATOR STEVENS requested Ms. Weed present the information to the committee in writing.

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CHAIR TOBIN asked, from the 102 major maintenance projects, 18 school construction projects, and 6 ineligible projects in FY 2016, how many have been completed or dropped from the list.

MS. WEED replied she would get back to the committee with an answer.

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MS. WEED moved to slide 10, Total Eligible Grant Projects and Actual Grant Funding by Fiscal Year, a spreadsheet comparison.

She said it is important to note that the "Amount Funded" does not include reappropriation or reallocation of fund balances. Hence, there are years that projects were funded in years with no appropriated funded amounts.

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MS. WEED moved to slide 11, School Construction and Major Maintenance Requests - FY 2026, and said the chart is a summary of the FY 2026 School Construction Grant List and the Major Maintenance Grant List totals. She reminded members that the information is the total projects that districts chose to submit applications for this past September:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**School Construction and Major Maintenance Requests -  
FY 2026 (whole dollars)**

**School construction**

Amount Requested	\$434,336,804
Eligible Amount	\$555,272,862
Prior funding	\$164,232,308
DEED Recommended Amount	\$391,040,554
Participating Share	\$27,928,783
State Share	\$363,111,771

**Major Maintenance**

Amount Requested	\$361,833,213
Eligible Amount	\$338,236,029
Prior Funding	\$5,107,092
DEED Recommended Amount	\$333,128,937
Participating Share	\$71,601,957
State Share	\$261,526,980

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SENATOR KIEHL asked for help decoding the school construction information. He said it appeared that districts requested \$434 million and another \$121 million was identified as eligible beyond that. He asked how more funding could be deemed eligible than what was requested, and how that aligns with what the department recommended.

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MS. WEED explained that this year was unusual due to a few projects being returned for additional funding. She said districts did not include previously funded amounts in their new requests, so to calculate the eligible amount correctly, those

amounts had to be added back and then subtracted under prior funding to reach the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) recommended amount.

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MS. WEED noted that changes to the eligible amount can result from DEED's evaluation of project scope, which may lead to increases or reductions in project budgets. She stated that inconsistencies between the application and the cost estimate can prompt DEED to reassess and determine the most accurate project scope.

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SENATOR KIEHL asked whether subtracting prior funding from the eligible amount results in the DEED recommended amount.

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MS. WEED replied that is how it works.

[4:07:17 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN asked for clarification on whether any portion of the \$363 million state share was requested in the FY 2026 budget from the Governor's Office.

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MS. WEED stated that there was no item in the capital budget. She explained that the REAA fund capitalization and the operating budget will cover the first two requests on the school construction list.

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MS. WEED moved to slide 12, Total Six-Year Plan Requests by FY, and said that when districts provide their six-year plans as an eligibility requirement, the department compiles the data to provide a snapshot of the current estimated need. Not all districts submit in a given year, and the data only includes projects identified by the districts. This is whole dollars, with no adjustment for inflation.

[Original punctuation provided.]

**Total Six-Year Plan Requests by FY (whole dollars)**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Total Six-Year Plan Requests</b>
FY2011	\$1,414,709,641
FY2012	\$1,996,553,852

FY2013	\$1,920,005,961
FY2014	\$1,800,302,814
FY2015	\$1,947,268,401
FY2016	\$1,765,110,357
FY2017	\$1,789,440,292
FY2018	\$1,687,522,113
FY2019	\$1,663,103,027
FY2020	\$1,389,376,552
FY2021	\$1,298,785,855
FY2022	\$1,336,041,672
FY2023	\$1,429,740,452
FY2024	\$1,507,086,565
FY2025	\$1,762,639,760
FY2026	\$1,846,645,049

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SENATOR KIEHL stated that the six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) requests include a variety of projects, not all of which qualify as major maintenance. He asked if there is a way to quantify how much of the six-year CIP requests are typically funded by school districts through sources other than state funding.

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MS. WEED stated that, in her observations, school districts do not include all their needs in the six-year plan, especially projects they expect to fund independently. She noted that districts typically, but not always, include only those projects for which they plan to request state aid.

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SENATOR KIEHL asked whether Ms. Weed knows the proportionality.

MS. WEED replied that the department does not have the necessary data and therefore cannot measure the proportion.

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MS. WEED moved to slide 13, Recent Funding (SB 237 Report), and said that DEED's report, School Capital Project Funding Under SB 237, provides additional data on the funding provided by the state for school capital projects. The most recent edition was published February 28, 2025. This documents the 1.75 billion dollars in project funding between the bond debt reimbursement and grant programs from FY 2011 through the current fiscal year:

[Original punctuation provided.]

### **Recent Funding (SB 237 Report)**

- SB 237 (Chapter 93 SLA 2010) – AS 14.11.035
  - Annual report on school construction and major maintenance funding
  - First report completed in February 2013
- \$1,749,967,541 in project funding 7/1/2010–12/31/2024
  - Total project value for Debt projects
  - State share value for Grant projects
- February 2025 School Capital Project Funding Under SB237 Report
  - Project Funding by District (report Appendix A)
  - Project Listing by District (report Appendix B)

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MS. WEED moved to slide 14, Recommended and Funded Capital Renewal by FY, and said the chart is an excerpt from the School Capital Project Funding Report and pointed out the marked shift in percentage of funded capital projects when the state experienced a sharp decline in revenues and continued to have budget pressure. She said there has been a significant reduction in capital spending on school projects both through the grant program and by instituting the moratorium on the debt reimbursement program.

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MS. WEED moved to slide 15, Mt. Edgumbe High School Deferred Maintenance:

[Original punctuation provided.]

#### **Mt. Edgumbe High School Deferred Maintenance (MEHS) (whole dollars)**

- Current projects funded \$11,424,000
- FY2026 deferred maintenance request \$22,842,000

MS. WEED said that as a division of the state, Mt. Edgumbe High School (MEHS) is not part of the AS 14.11 grant program and has received direct appropriations from the legislature or could receive funding through the department of transportation and public facilities' deferred maintenance list. Currently MEHS has 11.4 million dollars in funded projects. The department

submitted 22.8 million dollars in projects for MEHS in FY 2026 to the statewide deferred maintenance list.

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MS. WEED moved to slides 16 - 17, Additional Resources and Contact Information, and said numerous resources are available on DEED's Facilities website. She offered to answer questions.

SENATOR CRONK asked who makes decisions on major maintenance projects for new schools. He referenced his 2019 experience working on two schools in the Lower Yukon, including one built on a cement pad over permafrost, which later required extensive repairs. He also cited a project involving a 1970s Quonset hut that was renovated instead of replaced, despite higher costs. He expressed concern over accountability and emphasized the need to spend limited funds wisely.

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MS. WEED acknowledged the school project and stated the original construction occurred before her or the facility manager's tenure. She assumed the foundation decision went through the design process and was based on field design and a geotechnical report. She called it an unfortunate situation

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SENATOR CRONK emphasized the need to spend funds carefully and avoid costly mistakes, referencing past school projects as concerning examples. He acknowledged that the two projects occurred before the time of current leadership but wanted his concerns on record.

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CHAIR TOBIN acknowledged widespread concern about school maintenance and construction and stressed the need to uphold the constitutional responsibility to maintain safe schools. She asked the facility experts at DEED to share any recommended statutory or process changes to improve efficiency and ensure student safety.

MS. WEED stated that DEED could collaborate to identify potential recommendations.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Tobin adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting at 3:41 p.m.