

124D.88 METROPOLITAN MAGNET SCHOOL GRANTS.

Subdivision 1. **Policy and purpose.** A metropolitan magnet school grant program is established for the purpose of promoting integrated education for students in prekindergarten through grade 12, increasing mutual understanding among all students, and addressing the inability of local school districts to provide required construction funds through local property taxes. The program seeks to encourage districts located in whole or in part within the seven-county metropolitan area to make available to school age children residing in the metropolitan area those educational programs, services, and facilities that are essential to meeting all children's needs and abilities. The program anticipates using the credit of the state, to a limited degree, to provide grants to metropolitan area school districts to improve the educational opportunities and academic achievement of disadvantaged children and the facilities that are available to those children.

Subd. 2. **Approval authority; application forms.** To the extent money is available, the commissioner may approve projects from applications submitted under this section. The grant money must be used only to design, acquire, construct, expand, remodel, improve, furnish, or equip the building or site of a magnet school facility according to contracts entered into within 24 months after the date on which a grant is awarded.

Subd. 3. **Grant application process.** (a) Any group of school districts that meets the criteria required under paragraph (b), clause (1), may apply for a magnet school grant in an amount not to exceed the approved costs or expansion of a magnet school facility.

(b)(1) Any group of districts that submits an application for a grant shall submit a proposal to the commissioner for review and comment under section 123B.71, and the commissioner shall prepare a review and comment on the proposed magnet school facility, regardless of the amount of the capital expenditure required to design, acquire, construct, remodel, improve, furnish, or equip the facility. The commissioner must not approve an application for a magnet school grant for any facility unless the facility receives a favorable review and comment under section 123B.71 and the participating districts:

(i) establish a joint powers board under section 471.59 to represent all participating districts and govern the magnet school facility;

(ii) design the planned magnet school facility to meet the applicable requirements contained in Minnesota Rules, chapter 3535;

(iii) submit a statement of need, including reasons why the magnet school will facilitate integration and improve learning;

(iv) prepare an educational plan that includes input from both community and professional staff; and

(v) develop an education program that will improve learning opportunities for students attending the magnet school.

(2) The districts may develop a plan that permits social service, health, and other programs serving students and community residents to be located within the magnet school facility. The commissioner shall consider this plan when preparing a review and comment on the proposed facility.

(c) When two or more districts enter into an agreement establishing a joint powers board to govern the magnet school facility, all member districts shall have the same powers.

(d) A joint powers board of participating school districts established under paragraphs (b) and (c) that intends to apply for a grant must adopt a resolution stating the costs of the proposed project, the purpose for which the debt is to be incurred, and an estimate of the dates when the contracts for the proposed project will be completed. A copy of the resolution must accompany any application for a state grant under this section.

(e)(1) The commissioner shall examine and consider all grant applications. If the commissioner finds that any joint powers district is not a qualified grant applicant, the commissioner shall promptly notify that joint powers board. The commissioner shall make awards to no more than two qualified applicants whose applications have been on file with the commissioner more than 30 days.

(2) A grant award is subject to verification by the joint powers board under paragraph (f). A grant award must not be made until the participating districts determine the site of the magnet school facility. If the total amount of the approved applications exceeds the amount of grant funding that is or can be made available, the commissioner shall allot the available amount equally between the approved applicant districts. The commissioner shall promptly certify to each qualified joint powers board the amount, if any, of the grant awarded to it.

(f) Each grant must be evidenced by a contract between the joint powers board and the state acting through the commissioner. The contract obligates the state to pay to the joint powers board an amount computed according to paragraph (e), clause (2), and a schedule, and terms and conditions acceptable to the commissioner of finance.

(g) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 123B.02, subdivision 3, the joint powers and its individual members may enter into long-term lease agreements as part of the magnet school program.

Subd. 4. **Start-up costs.** During the first two years of a metropolitan magnet school's operation, the school is eligible for aid to pay for start-up costs and additional operating costs. Start-up cost aid equals \$500 times the magnet school's pupil units served for that year.

History: 1994 c 643 s 62; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 1996 c 284 s 1,2; 1Sp1997 c 4 art 2 s 33; art 7 s 7; 1998 c 397 art 7 s 159,164; art 11 s 3; 1998 c 404 s 48; 1999 c 241 art 4 s 10; 2000 c 489 art 3 s 5,6; 2000 c 492 art 1 s 48