

HOUSE BILL NO. 192

INTRODUCED BY L. REKSTEN

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO SCHOOL MAJOR MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY FUNDING; INCREASING THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE NOTICE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NONVOTED BUILDING RESERVE LEVY FOR MAJOR MAINTENANCE; CLARIFYING WHEN SAFETY TRANSFERS TO THE BUILDING RESERVE FUND MAY BE MADE; INCREASING THE SCHOOL MAJOR MAINTENANCE AMOUNT AND THE MULTIPLIER USED TO CALCULATE STATE MAJOR MAINTENANCE AID; SIMPLIFYING THE USES OF THE STATE MAJOR MAINTENANCE AID; AMENDING SECTIONS 20-9-116, 20-9-236, 20-9-502, AND 20-9-525, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND AN APPLICABILITY DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 20-9-116, MCA, is amended to read:

"20-9-116. (Temporary) Resolution of intent to increase nonvoted levy -- notice. (1) The trustees of a school district shall adopt a resolution no later than March 31 of each fiscal year and provide notice pursuant to subsection (2) whenever the trustees intend to impose an increase in a nonvoted levy in the ensuing school fiscal year for the purposes of funding any of the funds listed below:

(a) the tuition fund under 20-5-324;

(b) the adult education fund under 20-7-705;

~~(c) the building reserve fund under 20-9-502 and 20-9-503;~~

~~(d)~~(c) the transportation fund under 20-10-143 and 20-10-144;

~~(e)~~(d) the bus depreciation reserve fund under 20-10-147; and

~~(f)~~(e) the flexibility fund established in 20-9-543 for the purposes in 20-7-1602.

(2) The trustees shall provide notice of intent to impose an increase in a nonvoted levy for the ensuing school fiscal year by:

(a) adopting a resolution of intent to impose an increase in a nonvoted levy that includes, at a

1 minimum, the estimated number of increased or decreased mills to be imposed and the estimated increased or
2 decreased revenue to be raised compared to nonvoted levies under subsections (1)(a) through ~~(1)(f)~~ (1)(e)
3 imposed in the current school fiscal year and, based on the district's taxable valuation most recently certified by
4 the department of revenue under 15-10-202, the estimated impacts of the increase or decrease on a home
5 valued at \$100,000 and a home valued at \$200,000; and

6 (b) publishing ~~a copy of the resolution~~ in a newspaper that will give notice to the largest number of
7 people of the district as determined by the trustees and posting ~~a copy of the resolution~~ to the school district's
8 website;

9 (i) the resolution under subsection (2)(a); and

10 (ii) the resolution under 20-9-502(3)(a)(i) if adopted by the trustees. (Terminates June 30, 2027--sec. 7,
11 Ch. 402, L. 2019.)

12 **20-9-116. (Effective July 1, 2027) Resolution of intent to increase nonvoted levy -- notice. (1)**

13 The trustees of a school district shall adopt a resolution no later than June 1 in fiscal year 2017 only and no
14 later than March 31 in fiscal year 2018 and subsequent fiscal years and provide notice pursuant to subsection
15 (2) whenever the trustees intend to impose an increase in a nonvoted levy in the ensuing school fiscal year for
16 the purposes of funding any of the funds listed below:

17 (a) the tuition fund under 20-5-324;

18 (b) the adult education fund under 20-7-705;

19 ~~(c) the building reserve fund under 20-9-502 and 20-9-503;~~

20 ~~(d)~~(c) the transportation fund under 20-10-143 and 20-10-144; and

21 ~~(e)~~(d) the bus depreciation reserve fund under 20-10-147.

22 (2) The trustees shall provide notice of intent to impose an increase in a nonvoted levy for the ensuing
23 school fiscal year by:

24 (a) adopting a resolution of intent to impose an increase in a nonvoted levy that includes, at a
25 minimum, the estimated number of increased or decreased mills to be imposed and the estimated increased or
26 decreased revenue to be raised compared to nonvoted levies under subsections (1)(a) through ~~(1)(e)~~ (1)(d)
27 imposed in the current school fiscal year and, based on the district's taxable valuation most recently certified by
28 the department of revenue under 15-10-202, the estimated impacts of the increase or decrease on a home

1 valued at \$100,000 and a home valued at \$200,000; and

2 (b) publishing ~~a copy of the resolution~~ in a newspaper that will give notice to the largest number of
3 people of the district as determined by the trustees and posting ~~a copy of the resolution~~ to the school district's
4 website;

5 (i) the resolution under subsection (2)(a); and

6 (ii) the resolution under 20-9-502(3)(a)(i) if adopted by the trustees."

7
8 **Section 2.** Section 20-9-236, MCA, is amended to read:

9 **"20-9-236. Transfer of funds -- improvements to school safety and security.** (1) A school district
10 that has certified to the office of public instruction a current school safety plan or emergency operations plan
11 pursuant to 20-1-401 may transfer state or local revenue from any budgeted or nonbudgeted fund, other than
12 the debt service fund or retirement fund, to its building reserve fund in an amount not to exceed the school
13 district's estimated costs of improvements to school and student safety and security as follows:

14 (a) planning for improvements to and maintenance of school and student safety, including but not
15 limited to the cost of staffing for or services provided by architects, engineers, school resource officers,
16 counselors, and other staff or consultants assisting the district with improvements to school and student safety
17 and security;

18 (b) programs to support school and student safety and security, including but not limited to active
19 shooter training, threat assessments, and restorative justice;

20 (c) installing or updating locking mechanisms and ingress and egress systems at public school
21 access points, including but not limited to systems for exterior egress doors and interior passageways and
22 rooms, using contemporary technologies;

23 (d) installing or updating bullet-resistant windows and barriers; and

24 (e) installing or updating emergency response systems using contemporary technologies.

25 (2) Any transfers made pursuant to subsection (1) are not considered expenditures to be applied
26 against budget authority. Any revenue transfers that are not encumbered for expenditures in compliance with
27 subsection (1) within 2 full school fiscal years after the funds are transferred must be transferred back to the
28 originating fund from which the revenue was transferred.

(3) The intent of this section is to increase the flexibility and efficiency of school districts without an increase in local taxes. In furtherance of this intent, if transfers of funds are made from any school district fund supported by a nonvoted levy, the district may not increase its nonvoted levy for the purpose of restoring the transferred funds."

Section 3. Section 20-9-502, MCA, is amended to read:

"20-9-502. Purpose and authorization of building reserve fund -- subfund structure. (1) The trustees of any district may establish a building reserve fund to budget for and expend funds for any of the purposes set forth in this section. Appropriate subfunds must be created to ensure separate tracking of the expenditure of funds from voted and nonvoted levies and transfers for school safety pursuant to 20-9-236.

(2) (a) A voted levy may be imposed and a subfund must be created with the approval of the qualified electors of the district for the purpose of raising money for the future construction, equipping, or enlarging of school buildings or for the purpose of purchasing land needed for school purposes in the district. In order to submit to the qualified electors of the district a building reserve proposition for the establishment of or addition to a building reserve, the trustees shall pass a resolution that specifies:

(i) the purpose or purposes for which the new or addition to the building reserve will be used;

(ii) the duration of time over which the new or addition to the building reserve will be raised in annual, equal installments;

(iii) the total amount of money that will be raised during the duration of time specified for the levy; and

(iv) any other requirements under 15-10-425 and 20-20-201 for the calling of an election.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (4)(b), a building reserve tax authorization may not be for more than 20 years.

(c) The election must be conducted in accordance with the school election laws of this title, and the electors qualified to vote in the election must be qualified under the provisions of 20-20-301. The ballot for a building reserve proposition must be substantially in compliance with 15-10-425.

(d) The building reserve proposition is approved if a majority of those electors voting at the election approve the establishment of or addition to the building reserve. The annual budgeting and taxation authority of the trustees for a building reserve is computed by dividing the total authorized amount by the specified number

1 of years. The authority of the trustees to budget and impose the taxation for the annual amount to be raised for
2 the building reserve lapses when, at a later time, a bond issue is approved by the qualified electors of the
3 district for the same purpose or purposes for which the building reserve fund of the district was established.
4 Whenever a subsequent bond issue is made for the same purpose or purposes of a building reserve, the
5 money in the building reserve must be used for the purpose or purposes before any money realized by the
6 bond issue is used.

7 (3) (a) A subfund must be created to account for revenue and expenditures for school major
8 maintenance and repairs authorized under this subsection (3). The trustees of a district may authorize and
9 impose a levy of no more than 10 mills on the taxable value of all taxable property within the district for that
10 school fiscal year for the purposes of raising revenue for identified improvements or projects meeting the
11 requirements of 20-9-525(2). The 10-mill limit under this subsection (3) must be calculated using the district's
12 total taxable valuation most recently certified by the department of revenue under 15-10-202. The amount of
13 money raised by the levy, the deposits and transfers authorized under subsection (3)(f) of this section, and
14 anticipated state aid pursuant to 20-9-525(3) may not exceed the district's school major maintenance amount.
15 For the purposes of this section, the term "school major maintenance amount" means the sum of \$15,000 and
16 the product of ~~\$100~~ \$110 multiplied by the district's budgeted ANB for the prior fiscal year. To authorize and
17 impose a levy under this subsection (3), the trustees shall:

18 (i) following public notice requirements pursuant to 20-9-116, adopt no later than March 31 of each
19 fiscal year a resolution:

20 (A) identifying the anticipated improvements or projects for which the proceeds of the levy, the
21 deposits and transfers authorized under subsection (3)(f) of this section, and anticipated state aid pursuant to
22 20-9-525(3) will be used; and

23 (B) estimating a total dollar amount of money to be raised by the levy, the deposits and transfers
24 authorized under subsection (3)(f) of this section, anticipated state aid pursuant to 20-9-525(3), and the
25 resulting estimated number of mills to be levied using the district's taxable valuation most recently certified by
26 the department of revenue under 15-10-202; and

27 (ii) include the amount of any final levy to be imposed as part of its final budget meeting noticed in
28 compliance with 20-9-131.

1 (b) Proceeds from the levy may be expended only for the purposes under 20-9-525(2), and the
2 expenditure of the money must be reported in the annual trustees' report as required by 20-9-213.

3 (c) Whenever the trustees of a district impose a levy pursuant to this subsection (3) during the current
4 school fiscal year, they shall budget for the proceeds of the levy, the deposits and transfers authorized under
5 subsection (3)(f) of this section, and anticipated state aid pursuant to 20-9-525(3) in the district's building
6 reserve fund budget. Any expenditures of the funds must be made in accordance with the financial
7 administration provisions of this title for a budgeted fund.

8 (d) When a tax levy pursuant to this subsection (3) is included as a revenue item on the final building
9 reserve fund budget, the county superintendent shall report the levy requirement to the county commissioners
10 by the later of the first Tuesday in September or within 30 calendar days after receiving certified taxable values
11 and a levy on the district must be made by the county commissioners in accordance with 20-9-142.

12 (e) A subfund in the building reserve fund must be created for the deposit of proceeds from the levy,
13 the deposits and transfers authorized under subsection (3)(f) of this section, and anticipated state aid pursuant
14 to 20-9-525(3).

15 (f) If the imposition of 10 mills pursuant to subsection (3)(a) is estimated by the trustees to generate
16 an amount less than the maximum levy revenue specified in subsection (3)(a), the trustees may deposit
17 additional funds from any lawfully available revenue source and may transfer additional funds from any lawfully
18 available fund of the district to the subfund provided for in subsection (3)(a), up to the difference between the
19 revenue estimated to be raised by the imposition of 10 mills and the maximum levy revenue specified in
20 subsection (3)(a). The district's local effort for purposes of calculating its eligibility for state school major
21 maintenance aid pursuant to 20-9-525 consists of the combined total of funds raised from the imposition of 10
22 mills and additional funds raised from deposits and transfers in compliance with this subsection (3)(f).

23 (4) (a) A voted levy may be imposed and a subfund must be created with the approval of the qualified
24 electors of the district to provide funding for transition costs incurred when the trustees:

25 (i) open a new school under the provisions of Title 20, chapter 6;

26 (ii) close a school;

27 (iii) replace a school building;

28 (iv) consolidate with or annex another district under the provisions of Title 20, chapter 6; or

(v) receive approval from voters to expand an elementary district into a K-12 district pursuant to 20-6-326.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (4)(c), the total amount the trustees may submit to the electorate for transition costs may not exceed the number of years specified in the proposition times the greater of 5% of the district's maximum general fund budget for the current year or \$250 per ANB for the current year. The duration of the levy for transition costs may not exceed 6 years.

(c) If the levy for transition costs is for consolidation or annexation:

(i) the limitation on the amount levied is calculated using the ANB and the maximum general fund budget for the districts that are being combined; and

(ii) the proposition must be submitted to the qualified electors in the combined district.

(d) The levy for transition costs may not be considered as outstanding indebtedness for the purpose of calculating the limitation in 20-9-406.

(5) (a) A subfund in the building reserve fund must be created for:

(i) the funds transferred to the building reserve fund for school safety and security pursuant to 20-9-236; and

(ii) funds generated by a voter-approved levy for school and student safety and security pursuant to subsection (5)(b) of this section.

(b) A voted levy may be imposed with the approval of the qualified electors of the district to provide funding for improvements to school and student safety and security that meet any of the criteria set forth in 20-9-236(1)(a) through (1)(e). A voted levy for school and student safety and security may not be considered as outstanding indebtedness for the purpose of calculating the limitation in 20-9-406. The election for a voted levy for school and student safety and security must be conducted in accordance with the school election laws of this title, and the electors qualified to vote in the election must be qualified under the provisions of 20-20-301. The ballot for a building reserve proposition must be substantially in compliance with 15-10-425."

Section 4. Section 20-9-525, MCA, is amended to read:

"20-9-525. School major maintenance aid account -- formula. (1) There is a school major maintenance aid account in the state special revenue fund provided for in 17-2-102.

(2) The purpose of the account is to provide, contingent on appropriation from the legislature, funding for school major maintenance aid as provided in subsection (3) for school facility projects, including the payment of principal and interest on obligations issued pursuant to 20-9-471 for school facility projects, that support a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools under 20-9-309, including but not limited to: ~~and that involve, except as provided in subsection (7):~~

~~(a) first, making any repairs categorized as "safety", "damage/wear out", or "codes and standards" in the facilities condition inventory for buildings of the school district as referenced in the K-12 public schools facility condition and needs assessment final report prepared by the Montana department of administration pursuant to section 1, Chapter 1, Special Laws of December 2005; and~~

~~(b) after addressing the repairs in subsection (2)(a), any of the following:~~

~~(i) updating the facility condition inventory as recommended in the final report referenced in subsection (2)(a) with the scope and methods of the review to be determined by the trustees, employing experts as the trustees determine necessary. The first update must be completed by July 1, 2019, and each district shall certify the completion to the office of public instruction no later than October 31, 2019. Subsequent updates must be certified to the office of public instruction no less than once every 5 years following the first certification.~~

(a) improvements to school and student safety and security as described in 20-9-236(1); and

~~(ii)(b) undertaking~~ projects designed to produce operational efficiencies such as utility savings, reduced future maintenance costs, improved utilization of staff, and enhanced learning environments for students, including but not limited to projects addressing:

~~(A)(i)~~ roofing systems;

~~(B)(ii)~~ heating, air-conditioning, and ventilation systems;

~~(C)(iii)~~ energy-efficient window and door systems and insulation;

~~(D)(iv)~~ plumbing systems;

~~(E)(v)~~ electrical systems and lighting systems;

~~(F)(vi)~~ information technology infrastructure, including internet connectivity both within and to the school facility; and

~~(G)(vii)~~ other critical repairs to an existing school facility or facilities.

(3) (a) In any year in which the legislature has appropriated funds for distribution from the school major maintenance aid account, the superintendent of public instruction shall administer the distribution of school major maintenance aid from the school major maintenance aid account for deposit in the subfund of the building reserve fund provided for in 20-9-502(3)(e). Subject to proration under subsection (5) of this section, aid must be annually distributed no later than the last working day of May to a school district imposing a levy pursuant to 20-9-502(3) in the current school fiscal year, with the amount of state support per dollar of local effort of the applicable elementary and high school program of each district determined as follows:

(i) using the taxable valuation most recently determined by the department of revenue under 20-9-369:

(A) divide the total statewide taxable valuation by the statewide total of school major maintenance amounts and multiply the result by ~~171%~~ 187%;

(B) multiply the result determined under subsection (3)(a)(i)(A) by the district's school major maintenance amount;

(C) subtract the district's taxable valuation from the amount determined under subsection (3)(a)(i)(B); and

(D) divide the amount determined under subsection (3)(a)(i)(C) by 1,000;

(ii) determine the greater of the amount determined in subsection (3)(a)(i) or 18% of the district's mill value;

(iii) multiply the result determined under subsection (3)(a)(ii) by the district's school major maintenance amount, then divide the product by the sum of the result determined under subsection (3)(a)(ii) and the district's mill value; and

(iv) divide the result determined under subsection (3)(a)(iii) by the difference resulting from subtracting the result determined under subsection (3)(a)(iii) from the district's school major maintenance amount.

(b) For a district with an adopted general fund budget in the prior year greater than or equal to 97% of the district's general fund maximum budget in the prior year, the amount determined in subsection (3)(a)(iv) rounded to the nearest cent is the amount of school major maintenance aid per dollar of local effort, not to exceed an amount that would result in the state aid composing more than 80% of the district's school major maintenance amount.

(c) For a district with an adopted general fund budget in the prior year less than 97% of the district's maximum budget in the prior year, multiply the amount determined in subsection (3)(a)(iv) by the ratio of the district's adopted general fund budget in the prior year to the district's maximum general fund budget in the prior year. The result, rounded to the nearest cent, is the amount of state school major maintenance aid per dollar of local effort, not to exceed an amount that would result in the state aid composing more than 80% of the district's school major maintenance amount.

(4) Using the taxable valuation most recently determined by the department of revenue under 20-9-369, the superintendent shall provide school districts with a preliminary estimated amount of state school major maintenance aid per dollar of local effort for the ensuing school year no later than March 1 and a final amount for the current school year no later than July 31.

(5) If the appropriation from or the available funds in the school major maintenance aid account in any school fiscal year are less than the amount for which school districts would otherwise qualify, the superintendent of public instruction shall proportionally prorate the aid distributed to ensure that the distributions do not exceed the appropriated or available funds.

(6) If in any fiscal year the amount of revenue in the school major maintenance aid account is sufficient to fund school major maintenance aid without a proration reduction pursuant to subsection (5) and if in that same fiscal year the amount of revenue available in the school facility and technology account established in 20-9-516 will result in a proration reduction in debt service assistance pursuant to 20-9-346(2)(b) for that fiscal year, the state treasurer shall transfer any excess funds in the school major maintenance aid account to the school facility and technology account, not to exceed the amount required to avoid a proration reduction.

~~(7) School district boards of trustees that have certified to the office of public instruction a current school safety plan or emergency operations plan pursuant to 20-1-401 may, prior to addressing the school facility projects under subsection (2) of this section, utilize the proceeds from the levy authorized in 20-9-502(3) and any school major maintenance aid for improvements to school and student safety and security as described in 20-9-236(1).~~

~~(8)(7)~~ For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Local effort" means an amount of money raised by levying no more than 10 mills pursuant to 20-9-502(3) and, provided that 10 mills have been levied, any additional amount of money deposited or transferred

1 by trustees to the subfund pursuant to 20-9-502(3).

2 (b) "School major maintenance amount" means the sum of \$15,000 and the product of ~~\$100~~ \$110
3 multiplied by the district's budgeted ANB for the prior fiscal year."

4

5 NEW SECTION. **Section 5. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2021.

6

7 NEW SECTION. **Section 6. Applicability.** [This act] applies to notice requirements, school budgets,
8 property tax levies, and state major maintenance aid calculations related to school fiscal years beginning on or
9 after July 1, 2022.

10

- END -