

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 1700  
By: Shapiro  
Public Education  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

During the 79th Legislature, Third Called Session, legislation was passed requiring four years of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies to satisfy the recommended high school curriculum. These increased standards require school districts to offer one more laboratory-based science course than previously required. Since the curriculum standards apply to students entering the ninth grade in the 2007-2008 school year, school districts have three years to ensure that laboratory space is available to satisfy these requirements when these students reach 12th grade.

This bill establishes a competitive grant program for the construction and renovation of science laboratories and sets forth the program's eligibility requirements. The bill requires that the total amount of the grant be determined by appropriations.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Commissioner of Education in SECTION 1 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

Note: Unless otherwise specified, statutory references in this BILL ANALYSIS are to the Education Code.

This bill relates to state assistance with the costs of constructing or renovating public high school science laboratories. The bill amends Subchapter C, Chapter 7, Education Code, by adding Section 7.062 to read as follows:

Sec. 7.062. SCIENCE LABORATORY GRANT PROGRAM. (a) In this section, "wealth per student" means a school district's taxable value of property as determined under Subchapter M, Chapter 403, Government Code, or, if applicable, Section 42.2521, divided by the district's average daily attendance as determined under Section 42.005. (b) Using funds appropriated for that purpose, the Commissioner of Education (commissioner) shall establish a program to provide competitive grants to school districts for the purpose of constructing or renovating high school science laboratories. (c) The commissioner shall adopt rules necessary to implement the program, including rules addressing eligibility, application procedures, and accountability for use of grant funds. (d) The rules must: (1) limit the amount of assistance provided through a grant to not more than: (A) for a construction project, \$200 per square foot of the science laboratory to be constructed; or (B) for a renovation project, \$100 per square foot of the science laboratory to be renovated; (2) require a school district to demonstrate, as a condition of eligibility for a grant, that the existing district science laboratories are insufficient in number to comply with the curriculum requirements imposed for the recommended and advanced high school programs under Section 28.025(b-1)(1); and (3) provide for ranking school districts that apply for grants on the basis of wealth per student and giving priority in the award of grants to districts with low wealth per student.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2007.