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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
56th Legislature, 1st Session, 2023

Bill Number	<u>SB93</u>	Sponsor	<u>Campos</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.223148.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>SEC/SFC</u>
Short Title	<u>Mora School Security</u>		
Analyst	<u>Bedeaux</u>	Original Date	<u>1/26/23</u>
		Last Updated	<u></u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 93 (SB93) appropriates \$78 thousand for the Mora Independent School District to update and install surveillance cameras and security entry doors districtwide.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill appropriates \$78 thousand from the general fund to the Public Education Department (PED) for expenditure in FY24. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY24 shall revert to the general fund.

PED would be required to transfer the funds directly to the Mora Independent School District for expenditure on surveillance cameras and security entry doors.

SB93 would appropriate funding to a single school district outside the state equalization guarantee (SEG), the state's public school funding formula. Appropriations to specific schools or school districts for operational expenditures circumvent the public school funding formula, which was designed to distribute operational funds to all school districts and charter schools equitably. Appropriations and distributions outside the SEG may compromise the equity of the formula.

Under current law, a standalone appropriation to a school district for a capital project would create a "direct legislative offset," a credit that would be taken against a future award from the Public School Capital Outlay Council (PSCOC). Mora already has an outstanding offset of \$1.2 million, totaling 20 percent of the school district's annual budget. According to the Public School Facilities Authority (PSFA), this offset represents a significant barrier for the district to apply for funding from PSCOC. A bill endorsed by the Public School Capital Outlay Task Force and the Legislative Education Study Committee for the 2023 legislative session, [SB131](#), proposes to eliminate direct legislative offsets. If SB131 is enacted, SB93 will not create an offset, allowing Mora to receive the full state share of a future PSCOC award.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

School security continues to be a capital outlay priority for school districts. During the 2023 legislative interim, LESC and PSCOC heard testimony from many school districts requesting financial support for updated school security technologies, including cameras, fencing, metal detectors, electronic entry systems, secure school vestibules, and even gunshot detection technologies. Requests for school security funding come on the heels of a fatal 2022 shooting at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas that left 19 elementary school students and two teachers dead, as well as an incident in Newport, Virginia where a six-year-old student managed to smuggle a gun into school and shoot his teacher.

Despite renewed requests for security funding, school districts did not take full advantage of the now defunct PSCOC school security program, which set aside \$10 million per year from FY18 through FY22 for school security projects statewide. Awards from the program, which was created in response to a 2017 shooting at Aztec High School, never reached the full \$10 million annual threshold authorized in statute. One reason for the unpopularity of the expired security program may have been its cumbersome application process, as well as the presence of direct legislative offsets in many school districts like Mora, which disincentives participation in PSCOC award programs. Covid-19 may have also changed many districts' local priorities, reducing demand for school security and increasing demand for educational technology infrastructure.

In 2022, the legislature authorized a \$75 million appropriation to PSFA that was distributed directly to school districts based on a simple methodology. PSFA was required to provide each school district an amount proportional to the district's state match from the Public School Capital Improvements Act, commonly known as SB9. The methodology was considered effective, with funding flowing directly to school districts early in the school year. School districts are required to report to PSFA how the funding is used. Mora received \$100 thousand from the appropriation, but it remains unclear how those funds will be spent.

ALTERNATIVES

If enacted, SB131 would appropriate \$25 million for school security projects and \$75 million for "local priorities" statewide, potentially making SB93 unnecessary. Mora's estimated distribution included in SB131 is \$150 thousand, with \$50 thousand specifically earmarked for security projects and \$100 thousand authorized for any local priority, including security.

RELATED BILLS

Related to SB131, Public School Funding Changes, which would eliminate legislative offsets and appropriate \$25 million for school security and \$75 million for local priorities statewide.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Public School Facilities Authority (PSFA)

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