

State of Arizona
House of Representatives
Fiftieth Legislature
Second Regular Session
2012

HOUSE BILL 2075

AN ACT

MAKING APPROPRIATIONS; RELATING TO UNIFICATION AND CONSOLIDATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Unification and consolidation of school districts:
3 feasibility study

4 On or before September 15, 2012, each county school superintendent
5 shall commence a feasibility study on the unification, consolidation or
6 unification and consolidation of the school districts with coterminous
7 boundaries within that county. The county school superintendent may contract
8 with another person or entity to conduct the feasibility study. The
9 feasibility study shall be completed on or before September 15, 2013. The
10 county school superintendent shall provide a copy of the feasibility study on
11 or before September 30, 2013 to the governing board of each school district
12 within that county. The feasibility study shall include the following
13 components:

14 1. Relevant academic and scientific research regarding school size,
15 school district size, fiscal implications and legal issues that may include
16 the following:

17 (a) Use by any of the affected districts of section 15-910 or
18 15-910.01, Arizona Revised Statutes.

19 (b) Estimated adjustment of both the primary and secondary tax rates
20 of the affected districts.

21 (c) Application of a career ladder program if not all of the affected
22 districts currently participate.

23 (d) Application of overrides authorized under title 15, chapter 4,
24 article 4, Arizona Revised Statutes.

25 (e) Estimated potential savings and efficiencies to be achieved.

26 (f) Application of teacher experience indexes and existing salary
27 schedules of affected districts.

28 (g) A proposed salary schedule for the affected districts based on the
29 average median of existing teacher salaries.

30 (h) Potential impact on facilities needs.

31 (i) Curriculum alignment.

32 (j) Evaluations of materials and textbooks.

33 (k) Examination of special education programs.

34 (l) Examination of English language learner programs.

35 (m) Examination of school year and attendance policies.

36 (n) Examination of personnel compensation systems.

37 2. Consideration of geographic boundaries, communities of interest and
38 travel time of pupils. The county school superintendent may recommend
39 enlarging or diminishing the size of affected school districts.

40 3. The inclusion of unorganized territory where at least one per cent
41 of the population attends a public school within the boundaries of a unified
42 school district.

1 4. The provision of regional or statewide services for administration,
2 instructional and noninstructional support services to rural or isolated
3 schools and school districts or any other school district that wishes to
4 participate in the service plans.

5 5. Ensuring a smooth and efficient transition from the current number
6 of school districts in the county to the proposed number of school districts,
7 including an examination of the following:

8 (a) Mechanisms to allow the elected members of existing school
9 district governing boards to serve out the remainder of their terms.

10 (b) Assimilation by the proposed unified school districts of the legal
11 liabilities and other financial and contractual obligations of the school
12 districts being combined into a unified school district.

13 6. Preservation of local control while maximizing an efficient and
14 cost-effective delivery of educational services.

15 7. Specific mechanisms for the payment of legal liabilities,
16 contractual obligations, capital debt and overrides previously accumulated by
17 school districts before consolidation or unification and the acquisition of
18 legal liabilities, contractual obligations, capital debt and overrides by
19 school districts after consolidation or unification.

20 8. Identifying costs attributable to consolidation or unification.

21 Sec. 2. Appropriations; counties; school district unification
22 and consolidation costs

23 A. The sum of \$250,000 is appropriated from the state general fund in
24 fiscal year 2012-2013 to each county board of supervisors of a county with a
25 population of five hundred thousand persons or less for costs associated with
26 the implementation of this act.

27 B. The sum of \$750,000 is appropriated from the state general fund in
28 fiscal year 2012-2013 to each county board of supervisors of a county with a
29 population of more than five hundred thousand persons for costs associated
30 with the implementation of this act, including feasibility studies.