



Senate Bill No. 1201

An Act Concerning Authorization of State Grant Commitments for School Building Projects and Revisions to the School Building Project Statutes

Testimony of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS)

Committee on Education

March 15, 2023

Good morning, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and distinguished members of the Education Committee. My name is **Darren Hobbs**, and I am the **Deputy Commissioner of the Real Estate and Construction Services Division within the Department of Administrative Services**. I want to thank the Committee for raising our bill.

S.B. 1201 makes minor but meaningful changes to the School Building Projects Advisory Council (SBPAC) by adding two agencies to its membership: a representative from the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) and a representative from the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS).

Pursuant to C.G.S. 10-292q, the SBPAC is required to:

(1) develop model blueprints for new school building projects that are in accordance with industry standards for school buildings and the school safety infrastructure criteria, developed pursuant to section 10-292r, (2) conduct studies, research and analyses, and (3) make recommendations for improvements to the school building projects processes to the Governor and the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, education and finance, revenue and bonding.

Currently, the council consists of members from OPM, DAS, and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), along with six members appointed by the Governor.

As noted above, S.B. 1201 proposes adding a representative from the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to the SBPAC. During the 2022 legislative session, the School Safety Infrastructure Council (SSIC) was merged with the SBPAC, resulting in SBPAC being responsible for review and recommendations relating to school safety infrastructure criteria. DESPP is responsible for assisting in improving school security infrastructure through the administration of the School Security Competitive Grant Program making them an important partner in the development of school safety infrastructure criteria.

In addition, S.B. 1201 proposes adding a representative from the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS). The CTECS recently became a state agency, independent of the CSDE, and therefore representation by both entities on SBPAC is important.

The additional members, if the proposed changes are adopted, would increase the total membership of SBPAC from nine to eleven members. Although the makeup of the council is changing, the duties and responsibilities, as described above, will remain the same.

I urge the committee to support this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.