



**Senate Bill 5**

**AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL RESOURCES**

**Testimony of the Department of Administrative Services**

**Education Committee**

**March 11, 2024**

Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and distinguished members of the Education Committee. My name is Michelle Gilman, and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services. On behalf of DAS, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding **Senate Bill 5, *An Act Concerning School Resources***.

The Department of Administrative Services team has been pleased to participate in the School Indoor Air Quality Working Group since its inception, as well as to administer the HVAC Indoor Air Quality Grant Program for Public Schools.

DAS has been allocated \$450 million over three fiscal years to implement the HVAC Indoor Air Quality Grant Program for Public Schools. First, DAS was allocated \$75 million in bond funds and \$75 million in ARPA funds in fiscal year 2023, and then we received an additional \$150 million in both fiscal years 2024 and 2025. The program is for the purposes of installation, replacement, upgrades, and other improvements to indoor air quality in public schools, and it is a reimbursement-based program similar to our school construction grant programs.

The first round of applications closed December 1, 2022, and DAS awarded \$56 million in grant funds in the first round. The second round of applications closed December 31, 2023, and DAS is currently reviewing these applications. If all grants are awarded, the state share for the second round is approximately \$137 million for a total of \$193 million in awards between the first two rounds. DAS anticipates accepting applications for a third round at the start of the next fiscal year.

Section 8 of Senate Bill 5 requires each local or regional board of education to submit records for the maintenance of its heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems to the DAS any time such records have been updated. While DAS supports the goal of encouraging districts to maintain their HVAC systems in order to support cleaner indoor air quality in schools, the department has concerns about this section because maintenance of public school HVAC systems is a municipal function, and our department does not have expertise to interpret the data.

This new requirement would also require additional software applications at a significant cost along with staff and other resources to implement. DAS will continue having conversations with the proponents of the bill and other relevant stakeholders to refine this language going forward.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony and we look forward to continuing to work with the Committee.