



Beth Shope <beth.shope@sandites.org>

## Fwd: Legislative Update: Building Fund Bill Placed on November Ballot

1 message

Sherry Durkee <sherry.durkee@sandites.org>  
To: "Shope, Beth" <beth.shope@sandites.org>

Fri, Aug 3, 2018 at 3:51 PM

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Sherry Durkee  
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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **OSSBA** <announcements@ossba.org>  
Date: Thu, Aug 2, 2018 at 3:40 PM  
Subject: Legislative Update: Building Fund Bill Placed on November Ballot  
To: Sherry Durkee <sherry.durkee@sandites.org>

Legislative Update

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## Aug. 2, 2018: State Question 801

Members,

Today, Gov. Mary Fallin announced that a proposal to allow school districts to use building funds on recurring operational expenses will be on the statewide Nov. 6 ballot.

State Question 801 would amend the state constitution, which currently

prohibits the use of building funds for most recurring operational costs like teacher pay.

While we generally support local budget flexibility, this potential change could have concerning consequences:

- Many school districts already have shifted as many operational costs as currently allowed to the building fund to free up as much money as possible for classroom-related spending, including teacher salaries.
- Shifting the responsibility of funding teacher pay from state to local districts is concerning policy, particularly at a time when local funding is already comprising an increasing share of school budgets.
- The change could open up building fund money for employee salary negotiations, which could result in some districts having less money available to meet capital needs.
- Oklahoma school districts don't have excess building fund money going unused. In fact, most districts have unmet capital improvement needs.
- Oklahoma's education funding challenges aren't a result of restricted capital improvement dollars, and this change won't create an increase in the amount of money available to schools.
- Oklahoma is one of only four states that doesn't have state-dedicated funding for buildings so districts are heavily reliant on local funds for infrastructure maintenance and improvements.

Oklahoma spends an average of \$2,300 less per student each year than other states in our region, according to the latest federal data — an amount that includes capital spending. While that gap will close slightly with the new teacher pay funding, this potential change should not be characterized as a method to make Oklahoma school funding competitive with our regional peers.

The goal must continue to be a long-term plan to reach the regional average in per-student investment so schools can hire additional teaching staff to reduce class sizes and provide the necessary resources to ensure an exemplary educational experience for all students.

Sincerely,

Shawn Hime, PhD.  
Executive Director

Rooney Virgin  
Director of Government Relations

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