

AN ACT relating to schools.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Section 19-1 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/19-1) (from Ch. 122, par. 19-1)

Sec. 19-1. Debt limitations of school districts.

(a) School districts shall not be subject to the provisions limiting their indebtedness prescribed in "An Act to limit the indebtedness of counties having a population of less than 500,000 and townships, school districts and other municipal corporations having a population of less than 300,000", approved February 15, 1928, as amended.

No school districts maintaining grades K through 8 or 9 through 12 shall become indebted in any manner or for any purpose to an amount, including existing indebtedness, in the aggregate exceeding 6.9% on the value of the taxable property therein to be ascertained by the last assessment for State and county taxes or, until January 1, 1983, if greater, the sum that is produced by multiplying the school district's 1978 equalized assessed valuation by the debt limitation percentage in effect on January 1, 1979, previous to the incurring of such indebtedness.

No school districts maintaining grades K through 12 shall become indebted in any manner or for any purpose to an amount, including existing indebtedness, in the aggregate exceeding 13.8% on the value of the taxable property therein to be ascertained by the last assessment for State and county taxes or, until January 1, 1983, if greater, the sum that is produced by multiplying the school district's 1978 equalized assessed valuation by the debt limitation percentage in effect on January 1, 1979, previous to the incurring of such

indebtedness.

Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law to the contrary, in any case in which the voters of a school district have approved a proposition for the issuance of bonds of such school district at an election held prior to January 1, 1979, and all of the bonds approved at such election have not been issued, the debt limitation applicable to such school district during the calendar year 1979 shall be computed by multiplying the value of taxable property therein, including personal property, as ascertained by the last assessment for State and county taxes, previous to the incurring of such indebtedness, by the percentage limitation applicable to such school district under the provisions of this subsection (a).

(b) Notwithstanding the debt limitation prescribed in subsection (a) of this Section, additional indebtedness may be incurred in an amount not to exceed the estimated cost of acquiring or improving school sites or constructing and equipping additional building facilities under the following conditions:

(1) Whenever the enrollment of students for the next school year is estimated by the board of education to increase over the actual present enrollment by not less than 35% or by not less than 200 students or the actual present enrollment of students has increased over the previous school year by not less than 35% or by not less than 200 students and the board of education determines that additional school sites or building facilities are required as a result of such increase in enrollment; and

(2) When the Regional Superintendent of Schools having jurisdiction over the school district and the State Superintendent of Education concur in such enrollment projection or increase and approve the need for such additional school sites or building facilities and the estimated cost thereof; and

(3) When the voters in the school district approve a proposition for the issuance of bonds for the purpose of

acquiring or improving such needed school sites or constructing and equipping such needed additional building facilities at an election called and held for that purpose. Notice of such an election shall state that the amount of indebtedness proposed to be incurred would exceed the debt limitation otherwise applicable to the school district. The ballot for such proposition shall state what percentage of the equalized assessed valuation will be outstanding in bonds if the proposed issuance of bonds is approved by the voters; or

(4) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (1) through (3) of this subsection (b), if the school board determines that additional facilities are needed to provide a quality educational program and not less than 2/3 of those voting in an election called by the school board on the question approve the issuance of bonds for the construction of such facilities, the school district may issue bonds for this purpose; or

(5) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (1) through (3) of this subsection (b), if (i) the school district has previously availed itself of the provisions of paragraph (4) of this subsection (b) to enable it to issue bonds, (ii) the voters of the school district have not defeated a proposition for the issuance of bonds since the referendum described in paragraph (4) of this subsection (b) was held, (iii) the school board determines that additional facilities are needed to provide a quality educational program, and (iv) a majority of those voting in an election called by the school board on the question approve the issuance of bonds for the construction of such facilities, the school district may issue bonds for this purpose.

In no event shall the indebtedness incurred pursuant to this subsection (b) and the existing indebtedness of the school district exceed 15% of the value of the taxable property therein to be ascertained by the last assessment for State and

county taxes, previous to the incurring of such indebtedness or, until January 1, 1983, if greater, the sum that is produced by multiplying the school district's 1978 equalized assessed valuation by the debt limitation percentage in effect on January 1, 1979.

The indebtedness provided for by this subsection (b) shall be in addition to and in excess of any other debt limitation.

(c) Notwithstanding the debt limitation prescribed in subsection (a) of this Section, in any case in which a public question for the issuance of bonds of a proposed school district maintaining grades kindergarten through 12 received at least 60% of the valid ballots cast on the question at an election held on or prior to November 8, 1994, and in which the bonds approved at such election have not been issued, the school district pursuant to the requirements of Section 11A-10 may issue the total amount of bonds approved at such election for the purpose stated in the question.

(d) Notwithstanding the debt limitation prescribed in subsection (a) of this Section, a school district that meets all the criteria set forth in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection (d) may incur an additional indebtedness in an amount not to exceed \$4,500,000, even though the amount of the additional indebtedness authorized by this subsection (d), when incurred and added to the aggregate amount of indebtedness of the district existing immediately prior to the district incurring the additional indebtedness authorized by this subsection (d), causes the aggregate indebtedness of the district to exceed the debt limitation otherwise applicable to that district under subsection (a):

(1) The additional indebtedness authorized by this subsection (d) is incurred by the school district through the issuance of bonds under and in accordance with Section 17-2.11a for the purpose of replacing a school building which, because of mine subsidence damage, has been closed as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection (d) or through the issuance of bonds under and in accordance with

Section 19-3 for the purpose of increasing the size of, or providing for additional functions in, such replacement school buildings, or both such purposes.

(2) The bonds issued by the school district as provided in paragraph (1) above are issued for the purposes of construction by the school district of a new school building pursuant to Section 17-2.11, to replace an existing school building that, because of mine subsidence damage, is closed as of the end of the 1992-93 school year pursuant to action of the regional superintendent of schools of the educational service region in which the district is located under Section 3-14.22 or are issued for the purpose of increasing the size of, or providing for additional functions in, the new school building being constructed to replace a school building closed as the result of mine subsidence damage, or both such purposes.

(e) Notwithstanding the debt limitation prescribed in subsection (a) of this Section, a school district that meets all the criteria set forth in paragraphs (1) through (5) of this subsection (e) may, without referendum, incur an additional indebtedness in an amount not to exceed the lesser of \$5,000,000 or 1.5% of the value of the taxable property within the district even though the amount of the additional indebtedness authorized by this subsection (e), when incurred and added to the aggregate amount of indebtedness of the district existing immediately prior to the district incurring that additional indebtedness, causes the aggregate indebtedness of the district to exceed or increases the amount by which the aggregate indebtedness of the district already exceeds the debt limitation otherwise applicable to that district under subsection (a):

(1) The State Board of Education certifies the school district under Section 19-1.5 as a financially distressed district.

(2) The additional indebtedness authorized by this subsection (e) is incurred by the financially distressed

district during the school year or school years in which the certification of the district as a financially distressed district continues in effect through the issuance of bonds for the lawful school purposes of the district, pursuant to resolution of the school board and without referendum, as provided in paragraph (5) of this subsection.

(3) The aggregate amount of bonds issued by the financially distressed district during a fiscal year in which it is authorized to issue bonds under this subsection does not exceed the amount by which the aggregate expenditures of the district for operational purposes during the immediately preceding fiscal year exceeds the amount appropriated for the operational purposes of the district in the annual school budget adopted by the school board of the district for the fiscal year in which the bonds are issued.

(4) Throughout each fiscal year in which certification of the district as a financially distressed district continues in effect, the district maintains in effect a gross salary expense and gross wage expense freeze policy under which the district expenditures for total employee salaries and wages do not exceed such expenditures for the immediately preceding fiscal year. Nothing in this paragraph, however, shall be deemed to impair or to require impairment of the contractual obligations, including collective bargaining agreements, of the district or to impair or require the impairment of the vested rights of any employee of the district under the terms of any contract or agreement in effect on the effective date of this amendatory Act of 1994.

(5) Bonds issued by the financially distressed district under this subsection shall bear interest at a rate not to exceed the maximum rate authorized by law at the time of the making of the contract, shall mature within 40 years from their date of issue, and shall be signed by

the president of the school board and treasurer of the school district. In order to issue bonds under this subsection, the school board shall adopt a resolution fixing the amount of the bonds, the date of the bonds, the maturities of the bonds, the rates of interest of the bonds, and their place of payment and denomination, and shall provide for the levy and collection of a direct annual tax upon all the taxable property in the district sufficient to pay the principal and interest on the bonds to maturity. Upon the filing in the office of the county clerk of the county in which the financially distressed district is located of a certified copy of the resolution, it is the duty of the county clerk to extend the tax therefor in addition to and in excess of all other taxes at any time authorized to be levied by the district. If bond proceeds from the sale of bonds include a premium or if the proceeds of the bonds are invested as authorized by law, the school board shall determine by resolution whether the interest earned on the investment of bond proceeds or the premium realized on the sale of the bonds is to be used for any of the lawful school purposes for which the bonds were issued or for the payment of the principal indebtedness and interest on the bonds. The proceeds of the bond sale shall be deposited in the educational purposes fund of the district and shall be used to pay operational expenses of the district. This subsection is cumulative and constitutes complete authority for the issuance of bonds as provided in this subsection, notwithstanding any other law to the contrary.

(f) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this Section or of any other law, bonds in not to exceed the aggregate amount of \$5,500,000 and issued by a school district meeting the following criteria shall not be considered indebtedness for purposes of any statutory limitation and may be issued in an amount or amounts, including existing indebtedness, in excess of any heretofore or hereafter imposed

statutory limitation as to indebtedness:

(1) At the time of the sale of such bonds, the board of education of the district shall have determined by resolution that the enrollment of students in the district is projected to increase by not less than 7% during each of the next succeeding 2 school years.

(2) The board of education shall also determine by resolution that the improvements to be financed with the proceeds of the bonds are needed because of the projected enrollment increases.

(3) The board of education shall also determine by resolution that the projected increases in enrollment are the result of improvements made or expected to be made to passenger rail facilities located in the school district.

Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this Section or of any other law, a school district that has availed itself of the provisions of this subsection (f) prior to the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 93rd General Assembly may also issue bonds approved by referendum up to an amount, including existing indebtedness, not exceeding 25% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property in the district if all of the conditions set forth in items (1), (2), and (3) of this subsection (f) are met.

(g) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this Section or any other law, bonds in not to exceed an aggregate amount of 25% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property of a school district and issued by a school district meeting the criteria in paragraphs (i) through (iv) of this subsection shall not be considered indebtedness for purposes of any statutory limitation and may be issued pursuant to resolution of the school board in an amount or amounts, including existing indebtedness, in excess of any statutory limitation of indebtedness heretofore or hereafter imposed:

(i) The bonds are issued for the purpose of constructing a new high school building to replace two adjacent existing buildings which together house a single

high school, each of which is more than 65 years old, and which together are located on more than 10 acres and less than 11 acres of property.

(ii) At the time the resolution authorizing the issuance of the bonds is adopted, the cost of constructing a new school building to replace the existing school building is less than 60% of the cost of repairing the existing school building.

(iii) The sale of the bonds occurs before July 1, 1997.

(iv) The school district issuing the bonds is a unit school district located in a county of less than 70,000 and more than 50,000 inhabitants, which has an average daily attendance of less than 1,500 and an equalized assessed valuation of less than \$29,000,000.

(h) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Section or the provisions of any other law, until January 1, 1998, a community unit school district maintaining grades K through 12 may issue bonds up to an amount, including existing indebtedness, not exceeding 27.6% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property in the district, if all of the following conditions are met:

(i) The school district has an equalized assessed valuation for calendar year 1995 of less than \$24,000,000;

(ii) The bonds are issued for the capital improvement, renovation, rehabilitation, or replacement of existing school buildings of the district, all of which buildings were originally constructed not less than 40 years ago;

(iii) The voters of the district approve a proposition for the issuance of the bonds at a referendum held after March 19, 1996; and

(iv) The bonds are issued pursuant to Sections 19-2 through 19-7 of this Code.

(i) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Section or the provisions of any other law, until January 1, 1998, a community unit school district maintaining grades K through 12 may issue bonds up to an amount, including existing

indebtedness, not exceeding 27% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property in the district, if all of the following conditions are met:

(i) The school district has an equalized assessed valuation for calendar year 1995 of less than \$44,600,000;

(ii) The bonds are issued for the capital improvement, renovation, rehabilitation, or replacement of existing school buildings of the district, all of which existing buildings were originally constructed not less than 80 years ago;

(iii) The voters of the district approve a proposition for the issuance of the bonds at a referendum held after December 31, 1996; and

(iv) The bonds are issued pursuant to Sections 19-2 through 19-7 of this Code.

(j) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Section or the provisions of any other law, until January 1, 1999, a community unit school district maintaining grades K through 12 may issue bonds up to an amount, including existing indebtedness, not exceeding 27% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property in the district if all of the following conditions are met:

(i) The school district has an equalized assessed valuation for calendar year 1995 of less than \$140,000,000 and a best 3 months average daily attendance for the 1995-96 school year of at least 2,800;

(ii) The bonds are issued to purchase a site and build and equip a new high school, and the school district's existing high school was originally constructed not less than 35 years prior to the sale of the bonds;

(iii) At the time of the sale of the bonds, the board of education determines by resolution that a new high school is needed because of projected enrollment increases;

(iv) At least 60% of those voting in an election held after December 31, 1996 approve a proposition for the

issuance of the bonds; and

(v) The bonds are issued pursuant to Sections 19-2 through 19-7 of this Code.

(k) Notwithstanding the debt limitation prescribed in subsection (a) of this Section, a school district that meets all the criteria set forth in paragraphs (1) through (4) of this subsection (k) may issue bonds to incur an additional indebtedness in an amount not to exceed \$4,000,000 even though the amount of the additional indebtedness authorized by this subsection (k), when incurred and added to the aggregate amount of indebtedness of the school district existing immediately prior to the school district incurring such additional indebtedness, causes the aggregate indebtedness of the school district to exceed or increases the amount by which the aggregate indebtedness of the district already exceeds the debt limitation otherwise applicable to that school district under subsection (a):

(1) the school district is located in 2 counties, and a referendum to authorize the additional indebtedness was approved by a majority of the voters of the school district voting on the proposition to authorize that indebtedness;

(2) the additional indebtedness is for the purpose of financing a multi-purpose room addition to the existing high school;

(3) the additional indebtedness, together with the existing indebtedness of the school district, shall not exceed 17.4% of the value of the taxable property in the school district, to be ascertained by the last assessment for State and county taxes; and

(4) the bonds evidencing the additional indebtedness are issued, if at all, within 120 days of the effective date of this amendatory Act of 1998.

(l) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Section or the provisions of any other law, until January 1, 2000, a school district maintaining grades kindergarten through 8 may issue bonds up to an amount, including existing indebtedness,

not exceeding 15% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property in the district if all of the following conditions are met:

(i) the district has an equalized assessed valuation for calendar year 1996 of less than \$10,000,000;

(ii) the bonds are issued for capital improvement, renovation, rehabilitation, or replacement of one or more school buildings of the district, which buildings were originally constructed not less than 70 years ago;

(iii) the voters of the district approve a proposition for the issuance of the bonds at a referendum held on or after March 17, 1998; and

(iv) the bonds are issued pursuant to Sections 19-2 through 19-7 of this Code.

(m) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Section or the provisions of any other law, until January 1, 1999, an elementary school district maintaining grades K through 8 may issue bonds up to an amount, excluding existing indebtedness, not exceeding 18% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property in the district, if all of the following conditions are met:

(i) The school district has an equalized assessed valuation for calendar year 1995 or less than \$7,700,000;

(ii) The school district operates 2 elementary attendance centers that until 1976 were operated as the attendance centers of 2 separate and distinct school districts;

(iii) The bonds are issued for the construction of a new elementary school building to replace an existing multi-level elementary school building of the school district that is not handicapped accessible at all levels and parts of which were constructed more than 75 years ago;

(iv) The voters of the school district approve a proposition for the issuance of the bonds at a referendum held after July 1, 1998; and

(v) The bonds are issued pursuant to Sections 19-2

through 19-7 of this Code.

(n) Notwithstanding the debt limitation prescribed in subsection (a) of this Section or any other provisions of this Section or of any other law, a school district that meets all of the criteria set forth in paragraphs (i) through (vi) of this subsection (n) may incur additional indebtedness by the issuance of bonds in an amount not exceeding the amount certified by the Capital Development Board to the school district as provided in paragraph (iii) of this subsection (n), even though the amount of the additional indebtedness so authorized, when incurred and added to the aggregate amount of indebtedness of the district existing immediately prior to the district incurring the additional indebtedness authorized by this subsection (n), causes the aggregate indebtedness of the district to exceed the debt limitation otherwise applicable by law to that district:

(i) The school district applies to the State Board of Education for a school construction project grant and submits a district facilities plan in support of its application pursuant to Section 5-20 of the School Construction Law.

(ii) The school district's application and facilities plan are approved by, and the district receives a grant entitlement for a school construction project issued by, the State Board of Education under the School Construction Law.

(iii) The school district has exhausted its bonding capacity or the unused bonding capacity of the district is less than the amount certified by the Capital Development Board to the district under Section 5-15 of the School Construction Law as the dollar amount of the school construction project's cost that the district will be required to finance with non-grant funds in order to receive a school construction project grant under the School Construction Law.

(iv) The bonds are issued for a "school construction

project", as that term is defined in Section 5-5 of the School Construction Law, in an amount that does not exceed the dollar amount certified, as provided in paragraph (iii) of this subsection (n), by the Capital Development Board to the school district under Section 5-15 of the School Construction Law.

(v) The voters of the district approve a proposition for the issuance of the bonds at a referendum held after the criteria specified in paragraphs (i) and (iii) of this subsection (n) are met.

(vi) The bonds are issued pursuant to Sections 19-2 through 19-7 of the School Code.

(o) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Section or the provisions of any other law, until November 1, 2007, a community unit school district maintaining grades K through 12 may issue bonds up to an amount, including existing indebtedness, not exceeding 20% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property in the district if all of the following conditions are met:

(i) the school district has an equalized assessed valuation for calendar year 2001 of at least \$737,000,000 and an enrollment for the 2002-2003 school year of at least 8,500;

(ii) the bonds are issued to purchase school sites, build and equip a new high school, build and equip a new junior high school, build and equip 5 new elementary schools, and make technology and other improvements and additions to existing schools;

(iii) at the time of the sale of the bonds, the board of education determines by resolution that the sites and new or improved facilities are needed because of projected enrollment increases;

(iv) at least 57% of those voting in a general election held prior to January 1, 2003 approved a proposition for the issuance of the bonds; and

(v) the bonds are issued pursuant to Sections 19-2

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through 19-7 of this Code.

(Source: P.A. 93-13, eff. 6-9-03.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.