

Chapter 39.98 RCW
SCHOOL DISTRICT CREDIT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

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RCW 39.98.010 Finding—School district debt obligation not removed. The legislature finds that implementation of the credit enhancement program provided for in this chapter can provide substantial savings to the taxpayers of the state of Washington with minimal cost or risk to the state government. The guaranty provided by pledging the credit of the state to the payment of voter-approved school district general obligation bonds will encourage lower interest rates, and therefore lower taxes, for such bonds than school districts alone can command, despite the excellent credit history of such obligations. Any such guarantee does not remove the debt obligation of the school district and is not state debt. [1999 c 273 s 1.]

RCW 39.98.020 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Bond" means any voted general obligation bond issued by a school district, holding a certificate issued pursuant to this chapter for such a bond.

(2) "Credit enhancement program" means the school district bond guaranty established by this chapter.

(3) "General obligation bond" means any bond, note, warrant, certificate of indebtedness, or other obligation of a district that constitutes an indebtedness within the meaning of any applicable constitutional or statutory debt limitations.

(4) "Paying agent" means the paying agent selected, from time to time, for a bond issue pursuant to state law.

(5) "Refunding bond" means any general obligation bond issued by a district for the purpose of refunding its outstanding general obligation bonds.

(6) "School district" or "district" means any school district existing now or later under the laws of the state. [1999 c 273 s 2.]

RCW 39.98.030 Bonds guaranteed by full faith, credit, and taxing power of the state—Reference to chapter on face of bond conclusively establishes guaranty.

(1) (a) The full faith, credit, and taxing power of the state is pledged to guarantee full and timely payment of the principal of and interest on bonds as such payments become due. However, in the event of any acceleration of the due date of the principal by reason of mandatory redemption or acceleration resulting from default, the payments guaranteed shall be made in the amounts and at the times as payments of principal would have been due had there not been any acceleration.

(b) This guaranty does not extend to the payment of any redemption premium.

(c) Reference to this chapter by its title on the face of any bond conclusively establishes the guaranty provided to that bond under the provisions of this chapter.

(2) (a) The state pledges to and agrees with the owners of any bonds that the state will not alter, impair, or limit the rights vested by the credit enhancement program with respect to the bonds until the bonds, together with applicable interest, are fully paid and discharged. However, this chapter does not preclude an alteration, impairment, or limitation if full provision is made by law for the payment of the bonds.

(b) Each district may refer to this pledge and undertaking by the state in its bonds.

(3) Only validly issued bonds issued after January 1, 2000, may be guaranteed under this chapter. [1999 c 273 s 3.]

RCW 39.98.040 Certificate issued by state treasurer evidence of guaranty—Limitations on issuance of guaranteed bonds—Fees.

(1) (a) Any district, by resolution of its board of directors, may request that the state treasurer issue a certificate evidencing the state's guaranty, under this chapter, of its bonds.

(b) After reviewing the request, if the state treasurer determines that the district is eligible under rules adopted by the state finance committee, the state treasurer shall promptly issue the certificate as to specific bonds of the district and provide it to the requesting district.

(c) (i) The district receiving the certificate and all other persons may rely on the certificate as evidencing the guaranty for bonds issued within one year from and after the date of the certificate, without making further inquiry during that year.

(ii) The certificate of eligibility is valid for one year even if the state treasurer later determines that the school district is ineligible.

(2) Any district that chooses to forego the benefits of the guaranty provided by this chapter for a particular issue of bonds may do so by not referring to this chapter on the face of its bonds.

(3) Any district that has bonds, the principal of or interest on which has been paid, in whole or in part, by the state under this chapter, may not issue any additional bonds guaranteed by this chapter until:

(a) All payment obligations of the district to the state under the credit enhancement program are satisfied; and

(b) The state treasurer and the state superintendent of public instruction each certify in writing, to be kept on file by the state

treasurer and the state superintendent of public instruction, that the district is fiscally solvent.

(4) The state finance committee may establish by rule fees sufficient to cover the costs of administering this chapter. [1999 c 273 s 4.]

RCW 39.98.050 Debt service payments—Notifications upon nonpayment—Payments by state treasurer—Repayment. (1) (a) The county treasurer for each district with outstanding, unpaid bonds shall transfer money sufficient for each scheduled debt service payment to its paying agent on or before any principal or interest payment date for the bonds.

(b) A county treasurer who is unable to transfer a scheduled debt service payment to the paying agent on the transfer date shall immediately notify the paying agent and the state treasurer by:

(i) Telephone;

(ii) A writing sent by facsimile or electronic transmission; and

(iii) A writing sent by first-class United States mail.

(2) If sufficient funds are not transferred to the paying agent as required by subsection (1) of this section, the paying agent shall immediately notify the state treasurer of that failure by:

(a) Telephone;

(b) A writing sent by facsimile or electronic transmission; and

(c) A writing sent by first-class United States mail.

(3) (a) If sufficient money to pay the scheduled debt service payment have not been so transferred to the paying agent, the state treasurer shall, forthwith, transfer sufficient money to the paying agent to make the scheduled debt service payment.

(b) The payment by the state treasurer:

(i) Discharges the obligation of the issuing district to its bond owners for the payment, but does not retire any bond that has matured. The terms of that bond remain in effect until the state is repaid; and

(ii) Transfers the rights represented by the general obligation of the district from the bond owners to the state.

(c) The district shall repay to the state the money so transferred as provided in this chapter. [1999 c 273 s 5.]

RCW 39.98.060 Reimbursement of state-paid debt service payments—Interest and penalties—Legal actions—Revision of collection of taxes to meet obligations. (1) Any district that has issued bonds for which the state has made all or part of a debt service payment shall:

(a) Reimburse all money drawn by the state treasurer on its behalf;

(b) Pay interest to the state on all money paid by the state from the date that money was drawn to the date the state is repaid at a rate to be prescribed by rule by the state finance committee; and

(c) Pay all penalties required by this chapter.

(2) (a) The state treasurer shall establish the reimbursement interest rate after considering the circumstances of any prior draws by the district on the state, market interest and penalty rates, and the cost of funds or opportunity cost of investments, if any, that were required to be borrowed or liquidated by the state to make payment on the bonds.

(b) The state treasurer may, after considering the circumstances giving rise to the failure of the district to make payment on its bonds in a timely manner, impose on the district a penalty of not more than five percent of the amount paid by the state pursuant to its guaranty for each instance in which a payment by the state is made.

(3) (a) (i) If the state treasurer determines that amounts obtained under this chapter will not reimburse the state in full within one year from the state's payment of a district's scheduled debt service payment, the state treasurer may pursue any legal action, including mandamus, against the district to compel it to meet its repayment obligations to the state.

(ii) In pursuing its rights under (a) (i) of this subsection, the state shall have the same substantive and procedural rights as would a holder of the bonds of a district. If and to the extent that the state has made payments to the holders of bonds of a district under RCW 39.98.050 and has not been reimbursed by the district, the state shall be subrogated to the rights of those bond holders.

(iii) The state treasurer may also direct the district and the appropriate county officials to restructure and revise the collection of taxes for the payment of bonds on which the state treasurer has made payments under this chapter and, to the extent permitted by law, may require that the proceeds of such taxes be applied to the district's obligations to the state if all outstanding obligations of the school district payable from such taxes are fully paid or their payment is fully provided for.

(b) The district shall pay the fees, expenses, and costs incurred by the state in recovering amounts paid under the guaranty authorized by this chapter. [1999 c 273 s 6.]

RCW 39.98.070 Appropriation required. In order to effect the provisions of Article VIII, section 1(e) of the state Constitution, Senate Joint Resolution No. 8206, the legislature shall make provision for such amounts as may be required to make timely payments under the state school district credit enhancement program under this chapter in each and every biennial appropriations act. [1999 c 273 s 7.]

RCW 39.98.080 Adoption of rules. The state finance committee may adopt, under chapter 34.05 RCW, all rules necessary and appropriate for the implementation and administration of this chapter. [1999 c 273 s 8.]

RCW 39.98.900 Contingent effective date—1999 c 273. This act takes effect January 1, 2000, if the proposed amendment to Article VIII, section 1 of the state Constitution, guaranteeing the general obligation debt of school districts, is validly submitted to and is approved and ratified by the voters at the next general election. If the proposed amendment is not approved and ratified, this act is void in its entirety. [1999 c 273 s 10.]

Reviser's note: 1999 Senate Joint Resolution No. 8206 was approved at the November 1999 general election. See Article VIII, section 1 and Amendment 78 of the state Constitution.