

STATE ALLOCATION BOARD  
 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
 December 7, 2009

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION LOADING  
 STANDARDS AND FUNDING

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide a status update on issues related to Alternative Education schools within the School Facility Program (SFP). Alternative Education is a term commonly used to reference Continuation High, Community Day, County Community and County Community Day schools.

BACKGROUND

1999	Assembly Bill (AB) 695, Chapter 858, Statutes of 1999, required a study be conducted by the Department of General Services (DGS) to review the method of funding the construction and modernization of school facilities for Alternative Education Schools and authorized the State Allocation Board (SAB) to revise the per classroom loading standards.
March 2003	The results of the study required by AB 695 were released by DGS and distributed by the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) to all State Allocation Board (SAB) members and school districts in a report entitled the <i>Review of the Funding Methods for Continuation High, Community Day and County Community Schools</i> . The report also stated that “DGS Legal Counsel opined that to modify the funding for these schools will require further legislation.”
March 2004	The SAB approved regulations to change the Alternative Education New School allowance. The SAB directed the OPSC to report on the effects of the new grant one year after the regulations took effect.
February 2006	<p>The OPSC presented an update to the SAB which indicated that there were an insufficient number of projects funded under the new regulations to determine the impacts of the change to the Alternative Education New School allowance. The SAB provided the OPSC additional time to gather information.</p> <p>In response to additional discussion on other aspects related to Alternative Education funding, the SAB requested that all relevant parties meet to discuss and resolve the loading standard issue and the overall funding model for Alternative Education.</p>
August 2006	The OPSC presented an additional status update to the SAB on the Alternative Education New School allowance and loading standards. Due to the continued lack of project data, the OPSC still could not evaluate the impact of the regulation and could not present a loading standard recommendation because it would require information from the discussion of funding. It was decided that the OPSC would resume the Alternative Education funding

	and loading standards discussions at the Implementation Committee when the OPSC had sufficient funding data to review and staff resources were available.
August, 2009	Implementation Committee members inquired about the status of the Alternative Education item listed on the Pending Items list.

## AUTHORITY

Education Code (EC) Section 17071.25(a)(2)(C), amended by AB 695, authorizes the SAB “to revise the capacity standards after consideration of the recommendations developed by the Director of General Services” for alternative education schools.

EC Section 17072.17, established pursuant to AB 695, directed the DGS, in conjunction with the California Department of Education, the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst’s Office “to review the method of funding the construction and modernization of school facilities” for alternative education schools, and to “recommend modifications” as deemed appropriate.

## DISCUSSION

At the February 22, 2006 SAB meeting, OPSC reported that there was insufficient data to make a determination whether the Alternative Education New School Grant amount was sufficient. At the time, only eleven projects received apportionment that requested this grant augmentation. The SAB directed Staff to bring back more information when it was available. To date, only one of the original 11 projects has been audited. Overall, there are 25 Alternative Education school projects that have been closed out between 2000 and 2008. Of those, 17 projects were stand alone projects and 8 projects were additions to existing sites.

In the *Review of the Funding Methods for Continuation High, Community Day and County Community Schools* report was the recommendation that the SAB consider changing the classroom loading standard for Alternative Education schools to 18 pupils per classroom. This recommendation was based upon a total of 91 surveys mailed to 33 school districts throughout the State to gather information on existing space/uses and facility needs. The responses showed that an average of 18 pupils per classroom existed in the Alternative Education Schools. The survey also differentiated between the different types of programs (i.e., continuation high, community day) to address the needs of each specific program, but the results were nearly the same. Although AB 695 provided the SAB authority to adjust the Alternative Education loading standards, no adjustment has been made. OPSC would need further data for analysis to develop a recommendation to the SAB. The OPSC lacks expertise on stipulating loading standards.

Any change in the loading standard for Alternative Education schools would lead to a change in the amount of funding per classroom. At this point in time, the SAB does not have the authority to adjust the per pupil grant amount for Alternative Education pupils. Such significant changes in the funding model can be addressed via legislation, such as a future bond bill.