



River City High School

## Improved Audit Practices

By Rob Cook, Executive Officer

The School Facility Program is the crown jewel of California's public infrastructure programs. Since 1998, voters have authorized \$35.4 billion in K-12 school facility bonds...

[Read more](#)

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The Office of Public School Construction newsletter

*"To enrich the lives of California's school children as stewards of the taxpayers' commitment to education"*

**ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER**  
Governor, State of California

**FRED AGUIAR**  
Secretary, State and Consumer Services Agency

**WILL BUSH**  
Director, Department of General Services



Office of Public School Construction  
STAFF TO THE STATE ALLOCATION BOARD

# Improved Audit Practices

By Rob Cook, Executive Officer



The School Facility Program is the crown jewel of California’s public infrastructure programs. Since 1998, voters have authorized \$35.4 billion in K-12 school facility bonds and the State Allocation Board has apportioned \$28.9 billion to nearly 9,500 projects.

As stewards of the taxpayers’ commitment to education, the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) is responsible for ensuring the integrity of state school facility bond funds. Project audits are required to assure voters of bond accountability, and by Governor Schwarzenegger’s bond accountability Executive Order. This issue of Building Blocks highlights audit process improvements undertaken by the OPSC since 2007. These improvements incorporate best practices into the OPSC’s audit program in order to streamline the audit process while ensuring the integrity of the bond funds.

Increased efficiency in the OPSC’s audit process will improve customer service and outreach efforts to prevent negative audit findings. This approach will improve outcomes for school districts and the OPSC as we fulfill our promise to the voters who approved the state school facilities bonds.

Please send comments and suggestions for future editions of Building Blocks to [opscnews@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:opscnews@dgs.ca.gov).

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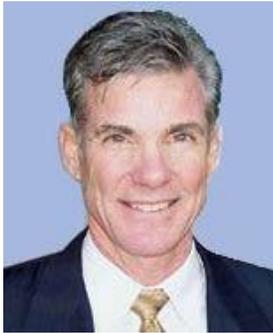
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# Improving Public Education

By Assembly Member Torlakson, State Allocation Board member



First as a teacher, and then as a legislator, I have dedicated my career to the education of our children. By applying my experience as a science teacher and high school coach, I have worked to reform the way public education works in California. Specifically, I have focused on improving student nutrition and physical education, giving schools the funding support they need to ensure academic achievement, and I have fought to reduce the high school dropout rate.

As a teacher and county supervisor, I saw first hand the need to streamline the school construction process and give joint use opportunities to school districts and communities. While in the Senate I authored a \$9 billion bond measure for the construction and modernization of schools that created a new partnership investment framework for state school facility financing. Since then, voters have passed additional statewide education bond measures to bring the total investment in K-12 school facilities to over \$35 billion.

This year, I [authored a bill](#) designed to bring communities together to improve education in their areas. Specifically, it would allow neighboring school districts to form "Education Finance Districts" to bring issues impacting those school districts directly to the voters. When our education system is hit with cut after cut, year after year, our local communities must be able to ask their own voters to prioritize education.

I have also authored legislation to expand after school programs, turn our lowest performing schools around, provide healthier foods in schools and increase funding for instructional materials.

We must use the current fiscal crisis to engage the community in the turn-around of our schools and enact real reforms to make sure our kids have the same opportunities that we had, not less.

Detailed information on my [background is available online](#).

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# OPSC Audit Process Improvements

By Steve Inman and Dennis Mehl

A 2007 independent Performance Audit of the Financial Hardship Program and internal audit program reviews identified areas for improvement in Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) audit processes. As a result, the OPSC has updated its audit programs and instituted process improvements by providing extensive training for audit staff, hiring experienced field auditors, conducting field audits, and adopting a risk assessment model. The OPSC is collaborating with the Department of Finance on these measures, which will improve the quality of the audits and help school districts in their efforts to comply with regulations.

As indicated in the July 2009 edition of Building Blocks, these efforts are also required by Governor Schwarzenegger’s bond accountability Executive Order, S-02-07. The accountability requirements of the Executive Order require in-progress monitoring. The prior OPSC audit process relied upon certifications by school districts and desk reviews. The incorporation of in-progress accountability monitoring through field audits helps prevent negative audit findings by addressing potential issues early on, thereby reducing the burden on school districts and streamlining the project close-out audit.

The overall objective of these process improvements is to bring the audit function into compliance with [Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards](#) to ensure the integrity of the bond covenants between the State and the voters who authorized passage of the school facilities bonds. The increased efficiency of the improved OPSC audit process benefits the public, school districts, the OPSC, and the State Allocation Board.

For more information, please contact:

Steve Inman at (916) 445-3269 or [steve.inman@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:steve.inman@dgs.ca.gov)

Dennis Mehl at (916) 445-8041 or [dennis.mehl@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:dennis.mehl@dgs.ca.gov)

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# Budget Act 101

By Rebecca Kirk and Bryan O'Dell

The Budget Act chaptered in July, specifically Chapter 2, Statutes of 2009 ([Assembly Bill X4 2—Evans](#)) made several changes that impact programs administered by the State Allocation Board (SAB).

## Restricted Routine Maintenance Account

For fiscal years 2008/09 through 2012/13, districts maintaining their facilities in good repair are exempt from the requirement to deposit a minimum of one percent of total expenditures into their Routine Restricted Maintenance Account.

For more information regarding this change, please contact:

Bill Johnstone at (916) 323-8176 or [bill.johnstone@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:bill.johnstone@dgs.ca.gov)

Jan Davey at (916) 327-0569 or [jan.davey@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:jan.davey@dgs.ca.gov)

Richard Sheffield at (916) 322-0329 or [richard.sheffield@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:richard.sheffield@dgs.ca.gov)

## Deferred Maintenance Program

The SAB is unable to provide funding for new Deferred Maintenance extreme hardship projects until July 1, 2013.

The district matching share requirement for Deferred Maintenance is formally suspended from fiscal years 2008/09 through 2012/13.

For more information regarding these changes, please contact:

Bill Johnstone at (916) 323-8176 or [bill.johnstone@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:bill.johnstone@dgs.ca.gov)

Jan Davey at (916) 327-0569 or [jan.davey@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:jan.davey@dgs.ca.gov)

Richard Sheffield at (916) 322-0329 or [richard.sheffield@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:richard.sheffield@dgs.ca.gov)

## Surplus Property Proceeds

From July 28, 2009 through January 1, 2012, districts are permitted to transfer site sale proceeds into their general fund account under specified

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conditions. The property must have been purchased entirely with local funds, and the proceeds must be used for a one-time general fund purpose. Districts must meet certain conditions prior to transferring the funds.

For more information regarding this change, please contact:

Charles Robertson at (916) 323-4013 or [charles.robertson@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:charles.robertson@dgs.ca.gov)

Wan Wong at (916) 323-3454 or [wan.wong@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:wan.wong@dgs.ca.gov)



## The School Facility Program

Since the inception of the School Facility Program in 1998, voters have authorized \$35.4 billion in bond funds, and the State Allocation Board (SAB) has apportioned 9,491 projects for a total of...



Since the freeze placed on disbursements from the Pooled Money Investment Board, the SAB has accepted and processed unfunded approvals for 301 projects as of August 10, 2009, for a total of...



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# Updating Eligibility Doesn't Have to be Scary

By Danielle Burch



October 31st is more than just cats and bats; it's also the last day to submit new construction funding applications using eligibility determined with 2008/2009 California Basic Educational Data Systems (CBEDS) information. New Construction applications received by the Office of Public School Construction after October 31st must use eligibility determined with 2009/2010 CBEDS information. When updating eligibility with 2009/2010 CBEDS information, you may consider another factor that can affect your eligibility: Dwelling Units. Proposed dwelling units within new residential developments may increase a district's [enrollment projection](#) and possibly result in increased New Construction eligibility.

Districts must submit documentation such as approved tentative tract maps to substantiate the number of new dwelling units within the district boundaries. Since local processes often differ, districts may be uncertain of what documentation should be submitted. Members of the Application Review Team are available to help districts in this process via phone or email correspondence, or through on-site outreach.

For Dwelling Unit assistance, please contact:

Danielle Burch at (916) 322-6211 or [danielle.burch@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:danielle.burch@dgs.ca.gov)

For Eligibility assistance, please contact your [OPSC Project Manager](#).



## Did you know?

Recent legislation (Chapter 18, Statutes of 2009 [[Assembly Bill 333](#)—Fuentes]) provides a 24-month extension for specified tentative tract maps. Therefore, some tentative tract maps that would otherwise have expired may be used to augment a district's new construction eligibility. Districts should contact their local planning authority to determine whether the extension is applicable to tract maps in their area. Districts are required to provide documentation from the local planning authority to demonstrate that tract maps submitted to the OPSC are valid. Please review Form SAB 50-01 for further information.

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# Earth Shaking News

By Josh Damoth

The Division of the State Architect (DSA), in conjunction with the Seismic Safety Commission, presented a report on earthquake early warning in California at the July 2009 State Allocation Board (SAB) meeting. The report focused on the world’s most advanced warning system, currently operating in Japan, and also included the status of a proposed federally supported early warning system in California.

The early earthquake warning system in Japan, which has been operational for over two years, enables citizens to receive an advanced alert of an impending earthquake from the Japan Meteorological Agency. In addition, the system features automated control systems that stop trains, place sensitive equipment in a safe mode, and isolate hazards while the public takes cover. The existing Japanese warning system illustrates the value that such a service can provide not only to schools, but to society as a whole.

According to new information from the United States Geological Survey, California has a 99 percent chance of having a magnitude 6.7 or larger earthquake during the next 30 years, and a 46 percent chance of having a magnitude 7.5 or larger earthquake during this time. In 2003, the DSA identified more than 7,000 California school buildings that may not perform well in earthquakes.

Unfortunately, the cost to upgrade every school building identified far exceeds the \$199.5 million available through the Seismic Mitigation Program, an SAB-administered program that provides funding to rehabilitate or replace the most vulnerable buildings. Therefore, on August 17, 2009, the SAB sent a recommendation for the California Integrated Seismic Network (CISN) to be considered for an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Federal grant in order to develop an early earthquake warning system. The CISN is a partnership among Federal, State, and university agencies involved

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in California earthquake monitoring. With Federal support for a California early earthquake warning system and the efforts of the CISN, schools could receive advanced alert of earthquake ground shaking, enabling them to take preventative action to enhance the safety of California's children.

For more information on the Seismic Mitigation Program, please view the [Facility Hardship Grant](#) section of our Web site or contact:

Josh Damoth at (916) 323-7938 or [josh.damoth@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:josh.damoth@dgs.ca.gov)



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# Regulations Update:

## Implementation of Senate Bill 658

- Adopted at the March 25, 2009, SAB meeting.
- Phases out Multi-Track Year-Round Program Education operational grants and makes related SFP eligibility changes.
- Public comment period ends on October 12, 2009.

## Implementation of Senate Bill 1556

- Adopted at the May 27, 2009, SAB meeting.
- Proposed regulatory changes allow elementary school districts that meet specific criteria to report enrollment on a High School Attendance Area basis.

## Emergency Repair Program (ERP)

- Adopted at the December 10, 2008, SAB meeting.
- Proposed to extend the time limit for local educational agencies to complete an ERP project by three months, and to submit Form SAB 61-04 accompanied by the return of any project savings and/or interest earned on State funds.
- Public comment period ended July 27, 2009.

## One-Year Extension of General Site Development Grant

- Adopted at the February 25, 2009, SAB meeting.
- Proposed to extend the grant until January 1, 2010.
- Public comment period ended August 24, 2009.

## Seismic Mitigation Program Amendments

- Adopted at the August 26, 2009, SAB meeting with emergency status.
- Proposed to add four building types to the definition of "Most Vulnerable Category 2" school buildings and to reduce the ground shaking intensity factor criteria.

Note: Regulations become effective upon review and approval of the Office of Administrative Law.

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# Joint-Use Program Approvals

By Deah Johnson

The [Joint-Use Program](#) 2008-09 application filing period was June 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009. The Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) received eight applications during this period and all eight qualified for unfunded approvals. For this funding cycle, a total of \$9,552,803 was available to fund Joint-Use projects, including \$3,603,223 from Proposition 47, \$1,441,050 from Proposition 55, and \$4,508,530 from Proposition 1D.

At the August 26, 2009 State Allocation Board meeting, the Board approved a transfer of an additional \$1,101,505 to the program to cover all eight applications for a full unfunded approval.

The OPSC is now accepting 2009-10 funding cycle Joint-Use applications through March 1, 2010. For more information, please contact:

Deah Johnson at (916) 322-5562 or [deah.johnson@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:deah.johnson@dgs.ca.gov)

Brian LaPask at (916) 327-0298 or [brian.lapask@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:brian.lapask@dgs.ca.gov)



VHS Gymnasium

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# Overcrowding Relief Grant Approvals

By Anetria Martin

The Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) presented the third round of **Overcrowding Relief Grant (ORG) Program** funding applications for unfunded approvals at the August 26, 2009 State Allocation Board meeting. All 21 applications received between August 1, 2008 and January 30, 2009 were eligible for participation in the ORG Program.

Through the 21 applications, 368 portable classrooms will be replaced with permanent classrooms. The State contribution for these projects is \$215,665,924, leaving a balance of \$685,352,999 available for the fourth funding cycle, which is currently being processed by the OPSC.

The OPSC is now accepting applications for the fifth funding cycle through January 29, 2010. For more information, please contact:

Anetria Martin at (916) 445-8156 or [amartin@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:amartin@dgs.ca.gov)  
Brigitte Baul at (916) 327-8379 or [brigitte.baul@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:brigitte.baul@dgs.ca.gov)



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# Bond Proceeds Release Continues

By Veronica Kaldani and Michael Watanabe

The Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) is releasing \$1.9 billion in bond sale proceeds.

Progress of fund releases as of August 10, 2009:

### March Bond Sale Proceeds:

**Total funds released:** \$547.7 million of \$548 million — 99 percent of bond funds

**Total projects:** 231 out of 235 — 98 percent of projects receiving funds

**Total districts:** 84 out of 85 school districts — 99 percent of districts

### April Bond Sale Proceeds:

**Total funds released:** \$1.099 billion of \$1.438 billion — 76 percent of bond funds

**Total projects:** 221 out of 289 — 76 percent of projects receiving funds

**Total districts:** 95 out of 118 — 81 percent of districts



## Did You Know?

In response to the freeze on disbursements, the SAB adopted the Financial Crisis Emergency Regulations at its January 14, 2009 meeting to ensure that school districts could continue to meet statutory and regulatory requirements during this unprecedented fiscal crisis. These regulations provide that any project receiving an apportionment on or before December 17, 2008 will have its 18-month time limit on fund release suspended. An item will be presented at the September 2009 SAB meeting to discuss the January 1, 2010 sunset of these emergency regulations. The SAB will also discuss approaches to identify projects that have been cancelled by districts.

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Office of Public School Construction  
STAFF TO THE STATE ALLOCATION BOARD

# Community Corner

## Eastside High School

### Dedication Ceremony

Friday, August 7, 2009—10:00 a.m.  
Eastside High School, Lancaster

## Mountain View Alternative High School

### Expansion Dedication Ceremony

Friday, August 28, 2009—2:00 p.m.  
Mountain View Alternative High School, San Jacinto

## Mendez Learning Center

### Kick-Off Celebration

Saturday, August 29, 2009—10:30 a.m.  
Mendez Learning Center, Los Angeles

## Mendez Learning Center

### Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

Thursday, September 24, 2009—9:00 a.m.  
Mendez Learning Center, Los Angeles

## Mesa View School

### Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

Saturday, October 10, 2009—9:00 a.m.  
Mesa View School, Calimesa

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- OPSC Deadlines and Key Dates .....

# Building Blocks

The Office of Public School Construction newsletter

*"To enrich the lives of California's school children as stewards of the taxpayers' commitment to education"*

*E-mail this newsletter.*

### Rob Cook

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# OPSC Deadlines and Key Dates

## Upcoming Meetings

### State Allocation Board [View calendar](#)

- September 23, 2009
- October 28, 2009
- December 2009 - Date TBD

[Webcasts of previous meetings](#)

### Implementation Committee [View calendar](#)

- September 3, 2009
- October 1, 2009
- November 5, 2009

[Webcast of August 6, 2009 meeting](#)

## Program Application Deadlines

### Overcrowding Relief Grant

- Fifth Round . . . . . January 29, 2010

### Career Technical Education Facilities Program – Third Cycle

- CDE Grant Application due to CDE by . . . . . September 18, 2009
- OPSC Application for Funding (Form SAB 50-10) due . . . . . April 1, 2010

Charter School Facilities Program . . . . . September 28, 2009

### Critically Overcrowded Schools Program

Final Conversion Application due by . . . . . October 27, 2009\*

## Reports

### Regional Occupational Center or

Program Facilities Report (Form 406R) . . . . . September 1, 2009

\* NOTE: Emergency Regulations provide time extensions, but projects needing current year eligibility to convert will need to submit by October 31, 2009.

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