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## State Allocation Board update: funds to be transferred to earthquake retrofit reserve

By Allen Young

Friday, October 31, 2008

After considerable debate, the State Allocation Board decided Wednesday to idle \$6.6 million in surplus bond money rather than offer the money for school seismic upgrades as had been advocated by several members.

The issue was one of a variety of items taken up by the board at its October meeting, which included discussions about classroom placement near a road with a record for accidents and review of material inaccuracy regulations.

Although it represents just a fraction of the funds the board oversees each year, the use of the \$6.6 million was contested because the funds were originally meant for joint-use community buildings like libraries and gymnasiums that might only be shared by schools. In the end, members decided to set the funds aside until the board revisits the matter in March.

Scott Harvey, chief deputy director of the California Department of General Services and a member of the allocation board, argued that as much money as possible should be put into seismic upgrades.

During the meeting, he called on the board to consider dropping the funds into earthquake-ready facility retrofits.

Later he offered to split the money between the seismic program and more general health and safety projects.

"We have a huge need for facility retrofitting," he said. "In order to reduce risk, I'm asking we set some of this money aside."

The seismic mitigation program allocates \$199.5 million through voter-approved Proposition 1D for earthquake upgrades. While the bonds were approved in 2006, facility upgrade projects at schools remain at a standstill.

Board member and state Sen. Bob Margett, R-Glendora, also defended the seismic mitigation program.

"We cannot be building unsafe schools," he said.

In other action, the board gave conceptual approval for \$1.75 million to help relocate classrooms away from a hazardous road at Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary. The road, which at one time had been dirt and only recently paved, has a record for bad accidents at a point considered too close to the classrooms.

Also, the board put off again a decision regarding material inaccuracy regulations. The issue has been pending before the board for some time, but there has been some disagreement between board members and school officials about the timing of interest penalties and repayment.