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# SCHOOL SITE IMPROVEMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS

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**Disciplines:** Structural

**History:**

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**PURPOSE:** This Interpretation of Regulations (IR) outlines the Division of the State Architect (DSA) policy regarding site improvements for school building projects.

**1. SITE WORK NOT INVOLVING STRUCTURES OR THEIR UTILITIES:** For school site improvement projects that involve only grading, landscaping, fill placement, paving, storm drains, or other work that does not support structures or involve their utilities, the school district is not required to file an application for DSA Structural Safety approval, although it has the option to do so if it chooses. DSA Access Compliance approval is required for all school projects whether they are site improvements, new construction, or alterations to existing construction.

In addition to the Education Code, the district is subject to compliance with local, city, or county ordinances as required by law, (e.g., local ordinances governing drainage, waste, the Health and Safety Code, the Government Code, etc.). It is the school district's responsibility to identify and comply with all such applicable statutes and regulations.

**2. EXISTING SITE WORK WITH ENGINEERED FILL INVOLVING NEW SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND THEIR UTILITIES:**

For projects involving school buildings and their utilities erected on an existing site with previously placed engineered fill, the architect shall show "existing fill" on the plans. Adequate data concerning the existing fill is required. The site soil investigation, compacted fill requirements, and inspection and testing records of the original fill placement, which has been verified by a geotechnical engineer's affidavit, shall be provided. If this documentation is not available or adequate, an investigation of the existing fill shall be made by a geotechnical engineer who shall prepare a report making recommendations regarding fill adequacy and allowable soil bearing pressures for the footings of the proposed buildings. This report shall be submitted to DSA with the plans and specifications for the project.

**3. SITE WORK INVOLVING NEW SCHOOL BUILDINGS OR SITE UTILITIES:**

All site improvement plans and specifications involving engineered fill designed to support structures or involving retaining walls, underground structures, utility systems, or other items as required shall be submitted to DSA for approval prior to start of construction.

Options for submitting school building project plans and specifications for site improvement are as follows:

**Option A – Single Application.** The entire project may be submitted for approval at one time under a single application, or site improvements may be listed as phase I of a multi-phase project submitted under a single application. The plan review fee for either of the above shall be based on the estimated cost of construction of the entire project. If the

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site improvements are submitted as phase I of the project the remainder of the project may be submitted under one or more subsequent phases under the same application.

**Option B – Multiple Applications.** Plans and specifications for site improvement work may be submitted under one application, and the school buildings for this site may be submitted under another application. The estimated cost and plan review fees for each application shall be based on the scope of work designated to each application. This option is intended for special circumstances and requires pre-approval by DSA.

**4. ENGINEERED FILL:** In all cases the geotechnical engineer making the investigation of the engineered fill and certifying to its adequacy for supporting school buildings is to be employed by the school district. The geotechnical engineer is prohibited from having an employment relationship with the contractor or developer for the existing site work during the placement of the fill material.

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### REFERENCES:

Education Code, Section 17283

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This administrative Interpretation of Regulations (IR) is intended for use by the Division of the State Architect (DSA) staff, and as a resource for design professionals, to promote more uniform statewide criteria for plan review and construction inspection of projects within the jurisdiction of DSA which includes State of California public elementary and secondary schools (grades K–12), community colleges, and state-owned or state-leased essential services buildings. This IR indicates acceptable practices as stipulated in the California Administrative Code (CCR, Title 24, Part 1) and aligning with DSA policies and procedures.

This IR is reviewed on a regular basis and is subject to revision at any time. Please check the DSA website for currently effective IRs. Administrative and technical IRs are listed on the DSA website at: <http://www.dgs.ca.gov/dsa/Resources/IRManual.aspx>