

Outreach Pilot Project

By Dennis Mehl

The Office of Public School Construction has launched a new pilot program involving program and fiscal staff in an effort to bring outreach to school districts. Initial efforts will focus on the front-end (application stage) of a project. The purpose is to inform our customers of the importance of establishing fiscal internal controls, which is a critical management responsibility.

This outreach function will provide added value to our customers by preventing minor issues from becoming major audit issues requiring regulatory action. Due to the long-term nature of our projects, it is critical to have controls established at the outset of a project.

Some examples of critical internal control questions include:

1. Who are the people who have access to the School Facility Program (SFP) accounting and financial records and how is that access controlled?
2. What do you do with prior audit findings? Do you have Corrective Action Plans?
3. What training does staff assigned to the program receive? Have you experienced significant staff turnover of key people in your organization?
4. Briefly describe controls you have in place to ensure accurate financial reporting of project activities and to ensure costs are coded properly and posted to the correct SFP project.
5. Are you aware of any complex or controversial accounting issues or difficult, complex calculations affecting program transactions? If so, what are those issues?
6. Describe your process for receiving and depositing cash and checks.

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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.

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- 7. Explain the process used for purchase or disbursement requests.
- 8. Explain the process used to contract for or purchase goods and services.
- 9. Describe how project funds are monitored.

If an entity develops procedure and written descriptions for the above questions, they will be well prepared for any future audit.

The goal is to establish that our customers have adequate controls in place. This will ensure that our customers are being provided adequate outreach during the lifecycle of their project and potentially minimize the close-out audit function and prevent issues that could result in a material inaccuracy.



Did You Know?

Transfer of Critically Overcrowded Schools Program Funds

At the September 23, 2009 State Allocation Board (SAB) meeting, the SAB authorized the transfer of \$68.1 million in available funds from the Proposition 47 (2002) and \$318.3 million from the Proposition 55 (2004) Unrestricted Critically Overcrowded School Facilities Funds. These funds will be transferred to the School Facility Program New Construction Fund to enhance financing for New Construction projects. The SAB reserved \$35.1 million for 12 months for future hazardous waste removal grant increases.

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