



A sky view at Creek View Ranch Middle School

Moving On

Welcome to the latest edition of Building Blocks, a monthly publication that provides an opportunity for us to share with you some of the important issues affecting school districts, the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC), and the State Allocation Board (SAB).

As you may be aware, I am continuing in my role as acting Deputy Director of the Interagency Support Division within the Department of General Services. It was a pleasure to serve as the OPSC/SAB's Executive Officer since June 2007. I look forward to my continued involvement with the organization at the departmental level...

[read more](#)

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ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor, State of California

RON DIEDRICH
Acting Director, Department of General Services



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Moving On: A Message from Rob Cook



Rob Cook

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It was a pleasure to serve as the OPSC/SAB's Executive Officer since June 2007. I look forward to my continued involvement with the organization at the departmental level.

Ms. Lisa Silverman became the acting Executive Officer of the OPSC/SAB on January 28, 2010. Ms. Silverman has truly been an asset to our organization's Fiscal Services division. In order to ensure that as many projects are funded as possible, the 150 employees of the OPSC seek to administer our programs with the highest regard for equity, integrity, and results. I am confident that in her new role, Ms. Silverman's contributions will further this goal and the OPSC's mission to enrich the lives of California's school children as stewards of the taxpayers' commitment to education.

This issue of Building Blocks highlights some of the actions taken at the January 27, 2010 SAB meeting, including an annual adjustment to School Facility Program grants and an authorization for additional funding rounds of the Overcrowding Relief Grant program. In addition, Career Technical Education Facilities Program application submittal tips are included for districts planning to apply by the April 1, 2010 deadline.

Please send comments and suggestions for future editions of Building Blocks to opscnews@dgs.ca.gov.

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A Farewell Message from Tom Sheehy



Tom Sheehy, Acting Secretary
State and Consumer Services
Agency

I was honored to serve as Chair of the State Allocation Board (SAB) for a brief 15 months. It was my pleasure getting to know so many school facilities personnel, and working with the Board and the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC).

Looking forward, school districts should be aware that the State's fiscal picture will continue to be very difficult for some time. Future bond sales will continue to be difficult to predict. One very important issue in the context of new bond authorizations being approved by the voters is

accountability and transparency in how State bond funds are expended. To that end, continued field audits by the OPSC will be very important to the success of the School Facility Program now and in the future.

In closing, I wish school districts, the OPSC, and the SAB all the best in 2010.

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

Tom Sheehy was appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on January 4, 2010.

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2010 Outlook

By Michael Watanabe



The School Facility Program (SFP) began 2009 with a dismal outlook when all cash disbursements were frozen by the Pooled Money Investment Board. School construction projects ground to a halt as school districts were left wondering how to complete their projects.

Fortunately, the State Treasurer’s Office was successful in selling General Obligation Bonds in March and April, and the Department of Finance provided \$2 billion from these sales to SFP projects. Bond sales in October and November provided an additional \$529 million, which allowed the State Allocation Board (SAB) to provide fund releases to all projects apportioned as of December 10, 2008.

The Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) encourages districts that are eligible to receive fund releases to submit a request as soon as

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possible. In order to be eligible for fund release, projects must have funded apportionments and at least 50 percent of their construction contracts in place. As of January 11, 2010, there was still \$655 million in cash available for fund releases.

The State Treasurer, Bill Lockyer, is supportive of the State’s infrastructure projects. Following the Governor’s release of his budget proposal, Lockyer issued this statement:

“Thousands of infrastructure projects will be threatened with delay or closure if the State cannot reenter the bond market soon. To do that, we need to quickly and credibly solve this fiscal year’s budget problem.”

“Infrastructure development is crucial to California’s economic recovery. It creates and protects jobs, helps put our businesses back in the black and strengthens our competitiveness. I know the Legislature and Governor are up to the challenge, and I’m ready to do whatever I can to help.”

The OPSC remains optimistic that the Treasurer’s Office will continue future bond sales. In 2009, the SAB approved \$1.9 billion in unfunded approvals and another \$384 million at the January 2010 meeting, indisputable evidence of school districts’ needs in California. As stewards of the taxpayers’ commitment to education, the OPSC will continue to monitor potential funding opportunities and is hopeful that 2010 will bring us closer to addressing this need.

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Career Technical Education Facilities Program Submittal Tips

Applications for the third funding cycle of the Career Technical Education Facilities Program (CTEFP) are due to the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) by April 1, 2010. The following application submittal tips were presented by OPSC project managers at various county facility planners' meetings. School district representatives are encouraged to ensure applications follow these guidelines prior to submittal to the OPSC.

- The equipment listed must have a useful life span of at least ten years, as indicated by the manufacturer and supported by the district's CTE Advisory Committee. This precludes spending funds on such items as textbooks, teaching guides, consumables, and computers, unless the computer is part of the piece of equipment such as a computer driven lathe. The documentation for the life span of the equipment must be kept by the district for audit purposes.
- Cost estimates for projects that are not a reservation of funds must reflect quantities and unit costs for all estimated costs. Districts are encouraged to utilize the [cost estimate template](#) provided by the OPSC, which can help to ensure that districts receive all grants for which they are eligible.
- When submitting Division of the State Architect approved plans which apply to multiple applications (e.g. CTEFP, new construction, and/or modernization), be sure to clearly indicate which classrooms are funded by each different application. Separate or pro-rated cost estimates should be submitted for the CTEFP project, clearly delineating the project scope. It is helpful to indicate on the cover letter that the plans include work funded from multiple programs.
- When applying for a New Construction CTEFP grant for classrooms that are also included in a standard New Construction or Modernization project, the application for CTEFP funding must indicate the new construction application number and number of classrooms funded by other programs.

For more information on the CTEFP, visit the [OPSC Web site](#) or contact: Lina Lyda at (916) 322-0260 or lina.lyda@dgs.ca.gov.

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New Construction Grant Adjustment Report

At the January 27, 2010 State Allocation Board (SAB) meeting, the Board reviewed [an item](#) regarding the [New Construction Grant Adjustment Report](#) that was prepared by the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) in November 2009. The Board requested further discussions to be held on the issue of School Facility Program (SFP) New Construction funding.

In an effort to foster transparency and accountability in school construction costs, the OPSC collected three years of data on 166 school projects to help benchmark state-funded projects. The information provided by school districts via Project Information Worksheets is invaluable in providing cost and funding comparisons for statewide school classroom construction.

“This is the largest study ever of classroom construction costs in this state,” said OPSC Executive Officer Rob Cook.

School districts now have more in-depth data to judge their projects, and to see where their costs stand in relation to a statistically significant cross section of school facilities built during the past three years.

“This can let school boards show their constituents what they are doing with taxpayer money, and support future efforts to raise new bond funding,” Cook added. “And it should help guide the state’s future classroom funding decisions.”

The report is based on 166 projects in 26 counties, representing a State investment of nearly \$1.3 billion. It includes elementary, middle, and high school projects, and encompasses permanent, modular, and portable facilities.

Key notes from the report include:

- State and local matching funds for new schools provided a budget ranging from \$240-\$520 per square foot. (Page 20)
- Local decisions greatly affect project cost—the costs per square foot for K-12 permanent buildings in the study range from \$201 to \$951. Districts

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determine the design and building components in construction projects, including the size, construction type and quality—within their means. (Page 13)

- Cost control is an important consideration in examining school facility funding and costs. The report references the [Little Hoover Commission’s June 2009 report on bond accountability](#), which examined issues contributing to steep school construction costs and provided suggestions for cost containment strategies. (Page 31)

Public informational hearings on the report were held in [November 2009](#) and [January 2010](#).



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SAB Actions

Seismic Mitigation



The State Allocation Board (SAB) recently provided an unfunded approval for the second Seismic Mitigation project, which will rehabilitate a student center/cafeteria building for the Piedmont Unified School District. The Seismic Mitigation Program provides State funding for the replacement or rehabilitation of the most vulnerable Category 2 buildings in the State.

Overcrowding Relief Grant Funding

The SAB approved 15 Overcrowding Relief Grant (ORG) applications for unfunded approvals at the January meeting. The ORG enables districts with overcrowded school sites to reduce the number of portable classrooms on eligible overcrowded school sites by replacing them with permanent classrooms. Applications for the fifth funding cycle were due January 29, 2010. At the January SAB meeting, the SAB approved regulatory amendments to have a sixth funding cycle because additional program

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funding will be available after the fifth funding cycle. Pending approval by the Office of Administrative Law, the final filing date for the sixth funding cycle will be July 30, 2010.

Developer Fees

At its January 27, 2010 meeting, the SAB opted to maintain Level I Developer Fees at the 2008 rate; the maximum Level I assessment per square foot is \$2.97 for residential construction, and \$0.47 for commercial/industrial construction. Level I developer fees are the lowest level fees, and may be assessed if the district conducts a Justification Study that establishes a connection between new housing developments within the district’s boundaries and the cost of the facilities needed to house future students.

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Regulations Update

Implementation of Senate Bill 1556

- Adopted at the May 27, 2009, State Allocation Board (SAB) meeting.
- Proposed regulatory changes allow elementary school districts that meet specific criteria to report enrollment on a High School Attendance Area basis.
- Public comment period completed. Regulation package submitted to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL).

One-Year Extension of General Site Development Grant

- Adopted at the November 4, 2009, SAB meeting.
- Proposed to extend the grant until no later than January 1, 2011.
- Public comment period ends on February 22, 2010.

Overcrowding Relief Grant (ORG) Regulations

- Adopted at the January 27, 2010, SAB meeting.
- Proposed to add a funding cycle for ORG applications received by July 30, 2010 and to authorize the SAB to establish additional future funding cycles.

Note: Regulations become effective upon review and approval of the OAL.

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Bond Proceeds Release Continues

By Veronica Kaldani and Michael Watanabe

The Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) continues to release bond sale proceeds for school facility projects that received an apportionment from the State Allocation Board, but received no funds due to the freeze placed on disbursements from the Pooled Money Investment Board. The OPSC has processed the following fund releases from the 2009 bond sales as of January 11, 2010:

March 2009 Bond Sale:

Total funds released: \$547.9 million of \$548 million — 99 percent of bond funds

Total projects: 234 projects have received funds

April 2009 Bond Sale:

Total funds released: \$1.246 billion of \$1.439 billion — 87 percent of bond funds

Total projects: 314 projects have received funds

October 2009 Bond Sale:

Total funds released: \$66.4 million of \$528.9 million — 13 percent of bond funds

Total projects: 15 projects have received funds

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Upcoming Meetings

State Allocation Board

- February 24, 2010

An item will be presented at the February meeting to discuss the possibility of moving to bimonthly meetings. The item is an attempt to recapture the six working days lost to furloughs. It would provide the OPSC with more time to work with districts on amicable solutions to resolve appeals administratively.

[Webcasts of previous SAB meetings](#)

Implementation Committee [View calendar](#)

- March 4, 2010

Special meeting to discuss Shovel Ready projects and the Seismic Program

- April 1, 2010
- June 3, 2010

[Webcasts of previous IMP meetings](#)

Program Application Deadlines

Joint-Use Program Application due March 2, 2010

Career Technical Education Facilities Program – Third Cycle

- Application for Funding (Form SAB 50-10) due April 1, 2010

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