



## DSA 20/20: FOCUS ON THE FUTURE – WHAT WAS LEARNED

Construction cost escalation makes building schools in California more expensive with every day that passes. With school districts spending more and receiving less in return, it is imperative that the school construction process be as efficient as possible so that school budgets experience as little cost escalation as possible. Acknowledging the impact our project review can have on final project costs and knowing that the only solution was through collaboration, the State Architect Chester A. Widom, FAIA and the Department of General Services' (DGS) Division of the State Architect (DSA) staff began outlining what would eventually be a series of statewide outreach events in Bakersfield, Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento and San Diego. The series titled DSA 20/20: Focus on the Future focused on how, together, we could deliver educational facilities more efficiently.

To facilitate a complete conversation, the events were comprised of client stakeholders, industry experts from the private sector, and representatives from the state entities involved in the school construction process. The format was designed to include everyone at every level. Our invite was extended to all stakeholders: architects, construction managers, consultants, planners, engineers, inspectors, program managers and school district officials.



Each event had its own characteristics based on the geographical location, although all events encompassed the highlights below:

- A look at the future in terms of what was the long range vision of school construction through the eyes of the construction industry, design professionals and school districts through a panel comprised of experts from the area.
- An overview of their respected areas from our Principal Architect, Principal Structural Engineer and Principal Fire and Life Safety Officer.
- The key phases of school construction requiring interaction with the state. DGS' Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) and the California Department of Education's (CDE) School Facilities and Transportation Services provided valuable advice on how to successfully negotiate the requisite application and review processes and how to obtain the necessary approvals.
- Discussions regarding recent DSA process changes and exciting initiatives planned for the future.
- Lunch time round table discussions with fellow participants and DSA staff where questions or comments would be relayed to the appropriate DSA staff member or answered on the spot.
- A session for those who are new to the process. There, they were able to ask questions one-on-one with DSA, OPSC, and CDE staff.



- Those more familiar with DSA’s plan review process were invited to a session where they could learn more about what causes delays in the plan review process, thereby learning tips on how to decrease the amount of time their project spends at DSA during plan review.

DSA felt an obligation to incorporate the most common errors seen in plan submissions in hopes that stakeholders would use the information to submit plan sets that are more complete, saving themselves and DSA time. During their presentations, Principal Architect Ida A. Clair, Principal Structural Engineer Jim Hackett, SE and Principal Fire and Life Safety Officer George Barnes shared what they and their regional staff see most often. A list of these items is provided in [Accurate + Complete Documents = Approved Project](#).

Over 700 stakeholders attended our series of statewide outreach events. We obtained valuable input and insight to incorporate into the future of DSA. Attendees had the opportunity to ask presenters questions throughout the day and were provided a questionnaire at registration to complete at their discretion. As promised at the events, DSA compiled the information within the questionnaires and shared it with the respective regional offices in hopes of sharing with staff the stakeholders’ concerns. The feedback DSA received is provided in [Survey Feedback](#).

Following the series of outreach events, DSA transformed the registration and event information page into a resource page in order to assist the stakeholders who were unable to join us: DSA 20/20: Focus on the Future. On the webpage are the power point



presentation files, the video recording links, and the document listing the most common plan review issues separated by structural safety, fire and life safety and access related errors.

Our series of outreach events could not have been a success without the involvement of others. We would like to thank our panelists (listed in [Panelists from Session 1: View Through a Long-Range Lens](#)) for joining the discussion. We would like to thank our partners: CDE's Juan Mireles, Fred Yeager, Bedelia Honeycutt, Lesley Taylor, and John Gordon; and OPSC's Lisa Silverman, Barbara Kampmeiner, Brian LaPask, Sue Reese and John Leininger. And, we thank our sponsors the American Institute of Architects California Council and the Structural Engineers Association of California.