

Supporting Priority School Districts Program

(Education Code sections 17078.45-48)



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction



Today's Goal

To discuss and receive input on the regulations for the Supporting Priority School Districts (SPSD) program before we present to the State Board of Education for consideration and approval.



Agenda

1. Background: What is the SPSPD Program?
2. Proposed Regulations:
 - a. Qualifying Criteria for Priority Districts
 - b. Application Process
 - c. Other Regulatory Sections
3. Stakeholder Questions and Comments



Background: How We Got Here

RECENT EVENTS

July 3, 2024

Assembly Bill 247 established a state program to “expand the objectives of the Supporting America’s Schools Infrastructure (SASI) Grant and support Priority School Districts...”
Education Code (EC) Section 17078.46.

November 5, 2024

California voters approved Proposition 2; \$10B in general obligation bonds for K-12 school facility repair, upgrade, and construction, including \$5M for the SPSD program.

January 22, 2025

The State Allocation Board (SAB) set aside \$5M for the SPSD program, pursuant to *EC* Section 17078.46 for direct technical assistance and administration.



Background: Steps Taken

- Held conversations with stakeholders
- Sought input on the development of regulations required by statute
- Stakeholders represented a variety of backgrounds and organizations
- April 17, 2025 – The California Department of Education (CDE) first presented Proposition 2 information with the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC)
- Stakeholder input helped shape the regulations
- Back today for input on the latest draft of regulations



Background: SASI vs. SPSP

SASI

Districts must meet ***all*** criteria:

- Enrollment of 2,500 or less
- Unduplicated Pupil Count (UPC) of 50 percent or more
- No SAB funding in the past decade

SPSP

Districts must meet ***one*** of the criteria:

- Enrollment of 2,500 or less
- “High” UPC (ranges left undefined)
- “Low” gross bonding capacity (ranges left undefined)
- Has not applied for SAB funding



Background: SASI vs. SPSPD (cont.)

SASI	SPSPD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding – Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding – State
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Districts selected by CDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Districts apply for support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program implemented via contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulations required to implement the program



Background: What Will the SPSD Program Do?

EC Section 17078.47

“Bond funds...shall be used for all of the following:”

1. “Direct technical assistance...”
2. “State and county collaboration efforts...”
3. “Development...of centralized online resources...”
4. “State level expertise on facility maintenance ...”



Background: What Does “Direct Technical Assistance” Provide?

EC Section 17078.47(a) “... *training* in at least all of the following:

1. Tools used to determine if a school facility is in 'good repair...'
2. Developing a school site inventory
3. Assessing facility needs, estimating costs, and prioritizing projects
4. Identifying funding options, including eligibility to participate in the School Facilities Program (SFP)
5. Developing facility contracts, including testing, architectural services, inspections, and construction.”



Next Step: Regulations

- “The State Department of Education shall adopt regulations setting forth the requirements and procedures for the allocation and use of bond funds ... including, but not limited to, all of the following:
- (a) The process for determining recipients of direct technical assistance
 - (b) The framework for state and county collaboration efforts
 - (c) The development, maintenance, and accessibility of centralized online resources
 - (d) Reporting and accountability measures to ensure the effective use of the allocated funds and the achievement of its intended outcomes.”



"High" UPC and "Low" Bonding Capacity

- The legislation leaves these terms undefined
- "High" UPC means above statewide average of 66 percent
- "Low" per-pupil bonding capacity means less than \$32,000 per student
- **Reminder:** under SPSD districts only need to meet one of four criteria



Determining Priority School Districts

1. An enrollment of fewer than 2,501 pupils **OR**
2. A high percentage of unduplicated pupils **OR**
3. Low gross bonding capacity per enrollment **OR**
4. Has **not** previously submitted an application for funding pursuant to the SFP



Weighted Scoring If Necessary

If the number of interested districts exceeds capacity, the CDE will use a weighted-scoring selection process, based on *EC* Section 17070.59.

- There will be one application period, unless it is determined that additional capacity is available.
- Once districts apply, they will *not* need to reapply.



An Enrollment of Fewer than 2,501 Pupils

Up to 4 points for low district enrollment:

- Enrollment of 1 to 125 students will receive 4 points.
- Enrollment of 126 to 380 students will receive 3 points.
- Enrollment of 381 to 1000 students will receive 2 points.
- Enrollment of 1001 to 2500 students will receive 1 point.



Low Gross Bonding Capacity Per Enrollment

Definition: District's gross bonding capacity (provided by local county authority) divided by the district's total enrollment.

- \$0 to \$9,999 = 8 points
- \$10,000 to \$19,999 = 6 points
- \$20,000 to \$54,999 = 4 points
- \$55,000 or more = 2 points



High Unduplicated Pupil Count

Definition: The most recent UPC of Free/Reduced-Price Meals, English Learners, Homeless & Foster Youth as determined for purposes of the local control funding formula.

- 75 to 100% = 4 points
- 50 to 74.99% = 3 points
- 25 to 49.99% = 2 points
- 0 to 24.99% = 1 points



Has Not Previously Submitted an Application for SFP Funding

Definition: Confirmation by the OPSC that the district has no prior SFP applications.

- Assign eight (8) points for districts that have no prior applications for SFP funding, as determined by OPSC.



Application Process

Challenges

Barriers to assessing Priority School District's interest:

- Often, Priority School Districts have limited capacity and resources for the application process
- CDE does not have district bonding capacity data

Solutions

Simple application process:

- One letter
- Minimal information requirements, such as bonding capacity
- Signature by superintendent or authorized designee
- Email or paper submission within a 60-day filing window



Summary of Application Process

- Applicants must meet at least **ONE** of the four statutory criteria
- If interest exceeds capacity, use weighted scoring
- Simple application process



Framework for State and County Collaboration

Participation: All local education agencies (LEAs) are eligible to participate in the network, not just priority school districts.

Notification: All meetings will be publicized at least 30 days in advance.

Organization: The network may be organized by geographic regions determined by the CDE.

Meetings: Held quarterly in partnership with the DSA and OPSC. Attend in-person or remotely.



Development, Maintenance, and Accessibility of Online Resources

- **Visibility:** Accessible from the CDE's website
- **Access:** Free access to all LEA users
- **Security:** Statute provides authority, but not the obligation, to require user registration if CDE deems it necessary, with a simple application process



CDE's Reporting and Accountability Measures

Annual reports followed by a summary report within six months

Program and Operations: Use of funds for administration, direct technical assistance, and website development

Impact:

- Number of districts served
- Number of sites visited, and buildings assessed

Effectiveness: Pre- and post-assessment from districts receiving technical support services



Final Thoughts

Questions, comments, & discussion



Additional Input

Supporting Priority School Districts Program

spsd@cde.ca.gov