

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION FUNDING

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1986

Reviewed by Board of Managers March 2009

- WHEREAS,** As a result of increasing school enrollments many school districts throughout the State of California are experiencing severe housing problems; and
- WHEREAS,** Changes in state law as of June 1978 resulted in local school districts no longer being empowered to levy new property taxes to meet new construction needs, maintain old facilities, enlarge or improve existing housing; and
- WHEREAS,** Current construction needs are primarily financed by the State of California at an inadequate funding level; the process for application to the State Allocation Board is cumbersome; and the eligibility standards are outdated and inappropriate, thus precluding the ability of school districts to meet the growing demands; and
- WHEREAS,** Year-round school programs can provide relief for overcrowding in some instances but cannot meet the entire need; and
- WHEREAS,** Quality education requires that students be adequately housed in a healthy, non-overcrowded environment; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA, its districts, councils and units, alert the public to this severe school facilities crisis in California schools; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That all districts, councils and units contact their state legislators regarding this need; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA seek and support legislation which will increase available funding for school construction, the maintenance of old facilities and the enlargement or improvement of existing housing, streamline the application procedures and upgrade eligibility standards and construction codes; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA seek and support legislation allowing school districts to use a portion of lottery funds for construction, as a local option.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

According to the State Department of Education, projected statewide enrollment in kindergarten through 8th grade will increase over 500,000 students by 1990. This will necessitate the building of over 26,000 new classrooms. Coupled with maintenance and improvement of existing facilities, estimated state school construction needs will total \$4 to \$6 billion during the next five years. Less than 25% of this need can be met under current programs.

Most areas of California have unmet needs in maintenance and construction and some school districts are already on year-round school programs and still have critical housing shortages.

According to the coalition for Adequate School Housing* (C.A.S.H.), revised standards must go along with new school construction funding. The criteria and standards now used for California school construction were set in 1947 and have not been changed. The original square footage allotments did not take into consideration that enclosed corridors, covered walkways and other non-instructional areas would be counted as part of the per-student classroom space. The districts which built enclosed non-instructional areas are now penalized because these areas are counted as usable classroom space. Furthermore, the 1947 standards do not take into account class size standards and changes in the instructional program, including new technology. California's square footage allowances are substantially below national standards.

Other eligibility criteria should also be changed to better enable districts to meet this housing crisis. Enrollment projection periods of two years are too short, given the exploding enrollments; and the application process must be shortened so needed classroom space is available now.

* Member Organizations:

- ACSA - Association of California School Administrators
- CASBO - California Association of School Business Officials
- CSBA - California School Boards Association
- CCAIA - California Council, American Institute of Architects
- CEFP - Council of Educational Facility Planners
- CCEEB - California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance