

SCHOOL FACILITIES CRISIS

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1990

Reviewed by Board of Managers April 2015

- WHEREAS,** The California State PTA adopted the “School Construction Funding” resolution at the 1986 convention and the State Board of Managers adopted the “School Facilities Crisis” resolution in January 1986; and
- WHEREAS,** PTA believes all students should be guaranteed a safe learning environment conducive to achieving excellence and enabling each individual to realize his or her maximum potential; and
- WHEREAS,** Fifty-five percent of our public school facilities were built prior to 1964 and over one-third of the facilities in the state are over 30 years old; and
- WHEREAS,** The ability of local school districts to utilize local general obligation bonds for school facilities is severely impaired by the requirement of a two-thirds vote, and current construction needs (primarily financed by the State of California) are funded at an inadequate level; and
- WHEREAS,** The school facilities crisis is escalating and projected growth in enrollment will necessitate building over 11 new classrooms each day, 365 days a year, through the year 2000; and
- WHEREAS,** Children and youth have no voice in the election process, it therefore becomes the responsibility of the adult society to be accountable for the safety and education of young people; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA, its units, councils and districts alert the public to the severe school facilities crisis in California’s public schools; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA seek and support legislation which will increase the funds available for school construction; provide adequate funding for renovation and rehabilitation of old facilities; and increase funding for ongoing maintenance of all facilities; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA seek and support legislation which will streamline the application process school districts must follow to secure approval from the State Application Board for school facility construction; and be it further

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RESOLVED, That the California State PTA, its units, councils and districts inform the public of the need to change the two-thirds vote requirement to a simple majority vote for approving local general obligation bonds for construction of school facilities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA, its units, councils and districts support legislation that does not fiscally penalize school districts that have passed a school bond for construction or rehabilitation of school facilities, or seize empty school sites for this purpose.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

According to the State Department of Finance, public elementary and secondary school enrollment in kindergarten through grade twelve will increase by about 35% from 1988 to 1998, an increase from 4.5 million students in 1988 to 6.1 million in 1998. This represents an increase of 1.6 million students.

The growth in our school-aged population is a statewide phenomenon. According to the Department of Finance estimates, 48 of California's 58 counties will experience a growth in student enrollments of at least 20% over the next decade.

Unfortunately, California is doing a terrible job of keeping up with the enormous need for school facilities. At the present time, all available state funding has effectively been committed. New funding is not expected until mid-1990. Yet there is a backlog of school building plans that exceeds \$6 billion, and that backlog is increasing by about \$100 million per month. An estimated \$17 billion will be needed for school construction over the next 10 years, just to meet the needs for **new** construction. At the same time, there is a growing need for additional funds to renovate and rehabilitate aging school facilities, and for the ongoing maintenance needs necessary to preserve a safe, clean environment conducive to learning.

The public schools are committed to serving every child. Turning away new students is not an option. If we fail to provide the necessary facilities, schools will simply get crowded – so crowded that quality education becomes virtually impossible. By failing to build schools now for our escalating school population, we will be creating an almost insurmountable problem not only for the immediate future, but for several years to come. Many rapidly growing school districts would be faced with double sessions.

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School Facilities Crisis - continued

The state also needs to make it easier for local communities to meet their own local needs. Under current law, a two-thirds vote is necessary to approve a local general obligation bond issue for school facilities. Since 1986, there have been 31 elections in which a “majority” of voters have approved such a bond measure, but the measure failed because it didn’t receive a two-thirds “yes” vote. If these elections had been held under a “majority rule,” over \$600 million in school facility needs would have been met through local efforts.

An additional problem for local school districts is the complex process for securing state funds. Throughout the process of seeking approval from the State Allocation Board for constructing, renovation and rehabilitating school facilities, the adoption of more workable, streamlined application procedures are of critical importance.