

Instructional Facilities: San Diego City Schools Policies and Practice

The following statement describes San Diego Unified School District's policies and practice regarding the creation, maintenance and disposition of instructional facilities. These policies and practices apply to District programs and facilities and, except as otherwise stated, are not intended to define the District's obligations, policy or practice *vis a vis* charter school facilities.

1. The mission of San Diego City Schools is to improve student achievement by supporting teaching and learning in the classroom.
2. The district believes that adequate and appropriate instructional facilities are essential to the success of the district's educational program. To assure the provision of such facilities, the district undertakes, to the full extent of its financial capacity, to build new facilities to meet the educational needs of a growing urban area, to maintain existing facilities in a state of good repair and to upgrade and modify its facilities to meet new educational needs as they are identified.
3. The district is committed to comply with the law and applicable regulations
4. The district relies on both short-term and long-range research into changing demographics within its boundaries to determine where to construct new schools and to plan for the accommodation of students in the areas in which student population growth at particular educational levels exceeds the physical capacity of the area's schools to meet the educational needs of all its students. It is essential that the district have flexibility regarding the use of its school capacity district wide to respond to the changing demographics. To the extent demographic trends or the District Long Range Facilities Plan indicate a future need for sites currently leased or otherwise not District-occupied, those sites should be reserved for long term District use and the current use continued pending implementation of the longer term District use.
5. The district undertakes to remain abreast of educational research to assure that its educational programs are supported by research data. Implementation of some research-driven educational programs, such as class-size reduction and small, focused secondary schools, increases demands on district facilities. It is essential that the district have flexibility regarding the use of its district wide school capacity to respond to research results that promise more effective teaching and learning.
6. When existing facilities can no longer accommodate the numbers of students at a given educational level (elementary, middle/junior high, senior high) in a particular location or neighborhood, the district employs four strategies, each of which has advantages and drawbacks.
 - a. Placing portable classrooms at the impacted school sites. Although less expensive than constructing additional permanent facilities, provision of portables is costly. Portables often must be located at a distance from a school's permanent facilities, making the programs housed in them more difficult to oversee and administer. Finally, placement of

portables takes up space on a school campus originally designated as a play/outdoor education (physical education) area, often reducing the availability of such space to levels below those recommended by the Council of Educational Facilities Planners.

- b. Transporting students by bus to schools that have space to accommodate additional students. Like providing portable classrooms, providing bus transportation is less expensive than constructing additional permanent facilities but it, too, is costly. Moreover, it adds time to the transported students' school day that the student might otherwise spend with his or her family. Finally, it removes students from their neighborhoods and is antithetical to the notion of neighborhood schools.
 - c. Changing school boundaries to include some portion of an impacted school's population within the attendance area of a school able to accommodate additional students. There is financial cost attached to boundary changes, plus significant psychological and educational cost. Boundary changes disrupt school attendance patterns upon which many families have come to rely. In some cases boundary changes may relocate families in school attendance areas quite unlike those that caused them to purchase homes in particular areas and are very unpopular in the district community. Boundary changes are considered a last-resort response to school overcrowding.
 - d. Changing grade configurations within schools. A change in the grade levels served by schools is undertaken a result of educational programming decisions designed to enhance student achievement and not implemented to remedy to school overcrowding.
7. When it becomes clear that individual schools in particular areas are not needed to meet current district educational needs, these facilities are leased, most often to private educational organizations, for specified periods. The income generated by lease payments supports the district's essential work and funds the district's mission of enhancing teaching and learning. In the current budget crisis, lease income is essential and should not be relinquished. The properties leased remain within the control of the district for future disposition to meet the district's changing educational needs. Any permanent removal of a property from district disposition reduces the ability of the district to respond to the changing needs of students district wide.
 8. Moreover, before any properties or portions of properties may be declared in excess, the district's Excess Property Committee may be required to review the matter and make an appropriate recommendation to the Board of Education. The committee is required by statute as a means of assuring that school districts do not declare property in excess without due consideration. The district will not consider any property as available for use other than a district program or administrative use unless the property has been declared excess by the district Board.
 9. The space required for an effective educational program at a particular location includes not only classroom space but also administrative space, space for provision of necessary educational support services, and space to accommodate educational programming changes. Accordingly, in determining whether excess space may exist in a particular school,

calculations must include not only numbers of students at grade levels and the number of classrooms they require, but also the need for adequate space to accommodate necessary administration, support services, and educational programming changes. When such calculations are made, it becomes clear that there are few district schools that have excess classrooms.

- 10. The district recognizes and supports the intent of the people expressed in Proposition 39: “public school facilities should be shared fairly among all public school pupils, including those in charter schools” (EC 47614 (a)). In the provision of such facilities, the relationship between the district and the charter school shall be at least revenue neutral. The district shall create a facility charge list for the use of district sites in accord with the law.
- 11. District staff, upon Board direction, initiated a process to:
 - a. Include charter school facility issues in the district’s long range facilities policy and plan,
 - b. Include charter school facilities in future facilities bond measures.

- 12. Consistent with the obligation to ensure the integrity of district programs, the district will consider temporary co-location of a district school and a district-authorized charter school on a case by case basis in the context of transitioning a school site to charter or other use under the following conditions:
 - a. Fairness to district students,
 - b. Compatible class configurations and grade levels,
 - c. Compatible uses of the site,
 - d. Compliance with the Field Act and all other state, federal and local requirements,
 - e. Provision of separate street access,
 - f. Charter school responsibility for compliance with all federal, state and local laws and regulations, including, but not limited to all land use and environmental concerns,
 - g. Charter school compliance with all aspects of its charter,
 - h. Charter school acceptance of all liability (and indemnity of the district) arising out of its use of the site,
 - i. Complete legal and physical separation of the traditional district program and the charter school program,
 - j. No adverse effect on the traditional district program at the site,
 - k. Charter school to provide appropriate and adequate custodial and maintenance effort to avoid diminution in value, and
 - l. Charter school to exercise proper and adequate supervision over its students, staff, parents, visitors, and others.

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- b. . Compatible class configurations and grade levels,¶
- c. . Compatible uses of the site,¶
- d. . Compliance with the Field Act and all other state, federal and local requirements,¶
- e. . Provision of separate street access,¶
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- h. . Charter school acceptance of all liability (and indemnity of the district) arising out of its use of the site,¶
- i. . Complete legal and physical separation of the traditional district program and the charter school program,¶
- j. . No adverse effect on the traditional district program at the site,¶
- k. . Charter school to provide appropriate and adequate custodial and maintenance effort to avoid diminution in value, and¶

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- 13. If a site is determined excess and the District makes that site available for charter school allocation, the District will consider co-location of more than one charter school at the site.