

DETERMINING NEEDS

The Superintendent or designee may maintain planning procedures for school facilities. These procedures may serve as the basis for determining facility needs that will enhance the District educational program. Accordingly, criteria for determining these needs may reflect the goals and objectives of the District Facilities Master Plan.

The Superintendent or designee may draw upon all necessary resources to assure that proposed District facilities meet the educational needs of the students and conform to all planning requirements imposed by state and local governmental agencies. These resources may include District staff, educational consultants, architectural and engineering firms, utility companies, local governmental and planning agencies, the County Department of Education, the California Department of Education, the Division of the State Architect, and the Office of Public School Construction.

To assure a comprehensive approach to projecting and planning needs, the following elements may be considered in planning school facilities and are not in priority order:

1. The expanding and changing educational program of the District including the number of children to be served and their specific educational needs
2. The District's Guiding Goals and Principles
3. The impact of proposed facilities on the community and considerations regarding community use of the facilities
4. Safety and welfare of students
5. The relationship between existing and new facilities
6. Community planning and zoning requirements
7. Other site specific information which provides guidance in the planning of facilities
8. Optimum number of schools opening, modernizing, re-purposing, changing grade level configuration or closing

Optimum Number of Schools, Re-Purposing and Changing Grade Level Re-Configuration

The goal of the District is to operate an optimum number of schools at each level: elementary, middle and high. The optimum number of schools for a given level is defined as the number of schools necessary to theoretically serve all students at a school of the targeted average enrollment. For example: the total enrollment for a given level divided by the targeted average school enrollment at that level. This goal may receive primary consideration in determining the need to modify an existing school.

The annual review of the District's Facilities Master Plan may include uploaded information regarding the number of schools operated at each level compared to the optimum number of schools, and may address the need to open, modernize, re-purpose, grade level configuration changes or close schools. Objective criteria may be established to determine the conditions under which a school may be considered for such modifications.

The families of students attending an aging school that is determined by the Board to no longer be a candidate for modernization, may be given notice of such determination within a reasonable time.

The families of students attending a school that is a candidate for closure, shall be informed of such consideration at least 12-months prior to the start of the school year in which the school's prospective closure is to take place. This condition does not apply to emergency situations that affect health and safety students and staff.

Objective criteria are established to determine the conditions under which a school may be considered a candidate for opening, (re-opening), modernization, re-purpose, grade level configuration changes or closing.

Opening a School

Consideration may be given to opening (or re-opening) a school, when one or more of the following conditions is met:

1. The actual number of schools at a given level is fewer than the optimum number of schools at that level;
2. The residential community to be served is not located within the suggested routes or close proximity of existing school(s), and the anticipated peak enrollment exceeds the targeted average enrollment for the school under consideration;
3. The residential community to be served is located within close proximity of existing school(s); however, the existing school(s) is/are unable to accommodate the anticipated peak enrollment, or the anticipated peak enrollment from the residential community to be served exceeds the targeted school average enrollment;
4. The proposed school site is located within close proximity of an existing school or schools, but those existing site(s) are determined to need substantial maintenance within the next 3 to 5 years and are not candidates for further investment;
5. The proposed school is capable of supporting larger, more flexible facilities with more cost-effective class enrollments and can be located on a site that has sufficient acreage and is easily accessible.

Modernization of a School

Modernizations are infrastructure improvements that extend the useful life of, or enhance the physical environment of, the school which may include but not limited to roof replacement, HVAC replacement, utility infrastructure replacement, space reconfigurations, structural, fire life safety and accessibility improvements.

Consideration may be given to modernization or re-purposing of a school, when one or more of the following conditions is met:

1. The actual number of schools at a given level is fewer than the optimum number of schools at that level;
2. The school facility serves a residential community that is beyond close proximity of another school and has an anticipated projected or actual enrollment that exceeds the targeted average school enrollment;
3. The school facility sits within close proximity of a residential area that is already served by other schools, but those schools do not each enroll the targeted average number of students, and the facility to be reconfigured has sufficient acreage and a satisfactory location with which to consolidate students from the nearby under-utilized schools that may be candidates for closure;
4. The school facility serves a residential area that could also be served by a new school in a new development within the same residential are; however
 - The existing site has been classified as a candidate for modernization because of its location, acreage, funding, access, transportation routes, or other key quality and functionality criteria that make it a better choice for the community than the new site; and
 - A workable modernization plan can be created and implemented, and the plan addresses student housing needs during construction;
5. The school facility provides the opportunity for serving alternative programs and optimum school choice within the overall mix of District school options.

Closing a School

The Superintendent or designee is authorized to close any of the District's educational facilities when, in the opinion of the Superintendent or designee, the physical welfare of the students and/or staff on that site can no longer be reasonably assured.

Prior to Board consideration of a recommendation to close a school, a comprehensive analysis of identified impacts must be conducted. Prime consideration is given when all early warning indicators, 1-5, are met:

1. The actual number of schools at a given level exceeds the optimum number of schools at that level;
2. The projected or actual enrollment from the assigned attendance area of a given school is fewer than half the targeted school average enrollment, or the overall enrollment is fewer than 75 percent of the targeted school average enrollment;
3. The projected or actual enrollment from the assigned attendance area of a given school can be accommodated at nearby schools while observing District policies on school size and reasonable proximity;
4. The necessary capacity to serve students from the assigned attendance area of a given school can be created at schools within close proximity of the residential area (or the assigned attendance area), if necessary, by some combination of factors such as, but not limited to:
 - Changing attendance boundaries
 - Returning students from outside the attendance boundaries to assigned attendance area school
 - Adding additional seating capacity
 - Relocating special District programs;
5. The projected benefit to the general fund is significant either through reduced expenditure or increased revenue.

An additional prime consideration is also given when the following condition is met:

The school has been classified as a site in need of substantial maintenance within the next 3 to 5 years and is not a candidate for modernization or re-purpose based on restrictive location, limited acreage, excessive funding requirements, limited access, undesirable transportation routes or other key quality or functionality criteria.

Participation in Planning

Procedures may be maintained that ensure members of the school community including staff, parents/guardians, students, and business and community representatives are given the opportunity to provide input into the planning process.

Consultants and other appropriate resource personnel from state and local agencies may be initiated into the planning process in accordance with state law, and in those instances where such consultation will benefit an effective planning process.

Assistance from colleges and universities, planning laboratories, and private consulting firms may be authorized when necessary to augment District staff resources.

Relations with the Public

The Board of Trustees acknowledges its responsibility to keep the public informed as to the need for new facilities, or renovating, remodeling and modernizing existing facilities. The Board also pledges to keep the public informed as to the use of any and all funds for school facilities.

The Superintendent or designee will provide information to the public through such means as the Board deems necessary and desirable.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

35160 Authority of Governing Boards, commencing January 1, 1976

35275 New school planning and design (re cooperative relations with recreation and park authorities)

39101 Powers concerning building and building sites

39110-39116 Plans of schoolhouses

39140-39159 Approval of plans and supervision of construction

39148 Persons qualified for the preparation of plans, specifications, and estimates and the supervision of construction

39150 Approval in writing from Department of General Services (construction or alteration of school facilities)

39158 Requirement for SD approval

39159 Contract provision required making plans etc. property of District

39210-39230 Fitness for occupancy

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

14030(c) Prepare educational specifications

14031 Submission to bureau of school facilities planning

14032 Plan approval

14033 Planning guides "The Guide for Planning Educational Facilities"

Policy

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CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

San Juan Capistrano, California