
Facilities Project Review and Environmental Compliance Policy 2-303

Scope:

This policy governs the adoption and use of objectives, criteria, and procedures for environmental review of District projects.

This policy applies to any proposed projects, including but not limited to:

- New construction or additions to school facilities;
- Modernization or major alterations;
- Site acquisition or expansion; and
- Installation of modular classrooms or portable buildings.

1. Environmental Review (CEQA Compliance)

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

- The District shall serve as the "Lead Agency" for its own projects.
- The Superintendent or designee shall determine whether a project is exempt, requires a Negative Declaration (ND), Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), or full Environmental Impact Report (EIR).
- CEQA review must be completed before project approval, contract execution, or site acquisition.

Purpose

The District is committed to responsible stewardship of District resources and compliance with applicable environmental and planning laws when considering facilities projects.

The District shall ensure compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in the evaluation of District project.

2. Site Acquisition and Environmental Assessments

Prior to acquiring property for school use:

- A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) shall be completed (Ed. Code § 17212).
- If the site is potentially contaminated, oversight from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) shall be obtained (Ed. Code § 17213).

3. Coordination with State Agencies

The Superintendent or designee shall coordinate as needed with:

- California Department of Education (CDE) for site and plan approvals
- Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) for state-funded projects
- Local planning, zoning, and fire authorities as required

4. Board Oversight and Public Involvement

- All CEQA documents requiring Board certification or adoption (e.g., ND, MND, EIR) shall be presented to the Board for action.
- The public shall be notified and invited to comment on applicable projects in accordance with CEQA guidelines.
- The Board may hold public hearings as appropriate.

Administrative Regulations

1. Initial Project Review

- When a facilities project is proposed, the Superintendent or designee shall:
 - Confirm project scope and timeline
 - Determine CEQA applicability
 - Identify required permits or approvals

2. CEQA Process

- Determine project type:
 - Categorical Exemption (minor alterations, small additions); or
 - Initial Study leading to ND, MND, or EIR.
- Prepare appropriate documentation or engage consultant support if needed.
- File notices (e.g., Notice of Exemption or Intent) with County Clerk and State Clearinghouse if required.
- Maintain record of public comments and responses.

3. Site Acquisition and Due Diligence

- Conduct Phase I ESA before purchasing any property .
- If hazardous materials are found, complete a Preliminary Endangerment Assessment (PEA) and consult DTSC.

4. Agency Coordination

- Submit CEQA clearance and site plans to California Department of Education (CDE) and Office of Public School Construction (OPSC), if required.
- Notify and coordinate with local authorities (planning, fire, utilities).
- Confirm zoning and general plan consistency.

5. Board Actions and Recordkeeping

- Present all CEQA findings and site acquisition decisions to the Board for approval
- Maintain official project and environmental records in the District Office for public review.
- Ensure all CEQA deadlines, notices, and filing requirements are met.