

**PARTNERING WITH K-12
EDUCATION IN BUILDING HEALTHY,
SUSTAINABLE, AND
COMPETITIVE REGIONS
*A CALIFORNIA POLICY SYMPOSIUM***



PROCEEDINGS SUMMARY & NEXT STEPS

On December 6, 2012, UC Berkeley’s Center for Cities & Schools, in collaboration with the **California Department of Education, California Department of Public Health, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, Strategic Growth Council, and Health in All Policies Task Force**, brought together leaders from across California to discuss the alignment of important policy agendas: ensuring high-quality, opportunity-rich schools in healthy, sustainable communities. This brief highlights key themes from the conversation and outlines next steps identified by participants.

SYMPOSIUM PARTNERS



PREFACE

On December 6th, 2012, more than 150 of California's education, community development, and public health leaders convened under a common roof. The group represented a diverse mix of backgrounds, professions, and jurisdictions united by the reality that their collective success rests upon the work of one another, and that collaboration provides an unique opportunity for shared success and win-wins for children, families, and communities.

Their stories reinforced what we know to be true: that educational outcomes, land use planning, and public health are inextricably linked. Neighborhoods rely on high-quality schools to serve as the cornerstones of a sustainable community; meanwhile, a school principal relies on the community to deliver her students to school healthy, safe, and ready to learn.

Further, we know that, when our cities, counties, regions, and school districts look toward the horizon in long-range planning, and when these plans realize a shared vision of a common future, all will benefit. To be sure, state policies must enable and encourage this type of local collaborative governance, rather than reinforce isolated planning decisions.

This call for a new model of collaborative planning is not just theoretical or speculative—it is ripe for immediate action. Over the next year, important updates will occur to both the General Plan Guidelines (which guide city and county planning) and Title 5 of the *California Code of Regulations* (which guides school facility planning and siting). This well-timed convergence provides an unparalleled opportunity to enable closer collaboration between schools, local governments, and regional agencies. We must not waste this opportunity.

The success of these efforts will depend on our ability to maintain an intergovernmental dialogue. The December 2012 symposium was the latest incarnation of that dialogue, but it was not the first or last time this mix of voices will share the floor. Although the event is behind us, the discourse continues, and we hope that you will take part.

We all want healthy, sustainable communities and high-quality, enriching schools for all our children. Real collaboration will get us there.

Jeff Vincent
Deborah McKoy
Center for Cities & Schools
UC Berkeley

Ken Alex
California Strategic Growth Council &
Office of Planning and Research

Connie Mitchell
California Department of Public Health

Kathleen Moore
California Department of Education

AGENDA

Welcome & Framing

Jeff Vincent, *Deputy Director, Center for Cities & Schools, UC Berkeley*

Opening Address

Tom Torlakson, *California State Superintendent of Public Instruction*

Opportunity-Rich Schools & Sustainable Communities: Harnessing “Win-Wins”

Deborah McKoy, *Executive Director, Center for Cities & Schools, UC Berkeley*

The Story on the Ground: Challenges & Opportunities from across California

Jeff Vincent, *Deputy Director, Center for Cities & Schools, UC Berkeley (moderator)*

Joe Dixon, *Assistant Superintendent, Santa Ana Unified School District*

Charles “Muggs” Stoll, *Director of Land Use and Planning, San Diego Association of Governments*

Keith Bergthold, *Assistant Director, Planning & Development, City of Fresno*

Tim White, *Assistant Superintendent, Oakland Unified School District*

Vu-Bang Nguyen, *Land Use Program Coordinator, Urban Habitat*

Eloisa Gonzalez, *Director, Cardiovascular and School Health, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health*

Luncheon & Speakers

Judi Larsen, *The California Endowment*

Meea Kang, *Domus Development and California Infill Builders Association*

Planning & Financing the Change: Leveraging the State’s Role for Quality School Facilities in Sustainable Communities

Jeff Vincent, *Deputy Director, Center for Cities & Schools, UC Berkeley*

Kathleen Moore, *Director, School Facilities and Transportation Services Division, California Department of Education*

Ken Alex, *Director, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research and Chair, California Strategic Growth Council*

Connie Mitchell, *Chief, Policy Unit, Office of Health Equity, California Department of Public Health*

SHARING CHALLENGES AND IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES

The following are key policy themes that emerged from the symposium discussion:

1. COLLECTIVE SUCCESS DEMANDS COLLABORATION

Challenge: Among schools, local governments, and regional agencies, the success of each in responding to regional growth and demographic trends depends on the success of the others.

Cross-sector stakeholders have a growing awareness of the inter-related dynamics among educational outcomes, health, and community growth and prosperity for California. Participants spoke about the fact that the success of communities, cities, and regions depends on high-quality schools – and inversely, high-quality schools depend on the vibrancy, health, and performance of communities. Keith Bergthold of the City of Fresno, for example, described how perceptions of school quality drive regional home buying patterns. Overall, population and school enrollment continue to grow in California, but at a slower pace than in previous years. It was noted that trends in regional growth and demographic change vary widely across the state. While some school districts are in decline and looking to close or consolidate schools, others are growing and building or expanding schools. These trends do not have a rigid pattern: growth, decline, and stability are occurring throughout California – urban, suburban and rural alike.

“Schools are the anchor tenants in our communities.”

-Keith Bergthold, City of Fresno

Opportunity: Local inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional collaboration can realize co-benefits that lead to healthy, sustainable communities with improved educational opportunities.

Many participants highlighted the potential benefits of new and broader partnerships among public and private organizations to realize ‘win-wins.’ Not only are partnerships necessary to bridge traditional policy or institutional divides, but also valuable in developing co-beneficial responses to regional growth and demographic trends. For many, these innovative partnerships are considered the ‘new normal’ in the midst of budget cuts from every direction. Eloisa Gonzales of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health spoke about high childhood obesity rates and the successes in her region after expanding the joint use of K-12 school campuses to

“The future of our state can’t be left up to our schools alone – we all have a role to play here: Local school districts need strong partnerships with their families and communities to plan for the facility improvements that will give the most benefits to students; they also need to strengthen their partnerships with other local agencies, including cities and counties...And work with them to invest in communities that need a boost, to maximize joint use partnerships, to make sure schools are surrounded by safe, healthy communities that promote student success.”

-Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

increase community physical activity and improve health. Tim White of Oakland Unified School District likened educational institutions to ‘saviors’ in a city like Oakland with high crime and poverty—community factors that greatly affect education. The policy tools that enable healthy, sustainable communities must also support the conditions necessary for learning.

2. REGIONAL PLANNING PROCESSES HELP TO OVERCOME STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION

Challenge: Structural barriers inhibit our ability to collaborate.

Participants pointed repeatedly to the many barriers to collaborative partnerships that tackle complex local challenges. One core challenge is that school district geographic boundaries rarely match those of other local/regional planning entities: a school district may overlap with multiple municipalities, or vice versa. Further, state policies rarely promote collaboration. For example, California’s local planning codes require very little coordination or communication between local governments and school districts. Nor do state laws and guidance incentivize coordination between municipal general plans and school district facility master plans, despite their inherent intersection. Likewise, state funding in education (especially K-12 capital funds) and transportation have insufficient criteria for evaluating cross-sector impacts and health co-benefits, especially as they relate to schools. The results, participants noted, include missed opportunities and, too often, inefficient investments that might resolve one problem while creating another. Clarity in state policies, guidance, and funding priorities would likely improve collaborative local planning for better outcomes in health, education, and sustainability, which, in turn, maximize investments across sectors.

“It is very comfortable to work in our silo. But it’s doing a disservice to the communities we are all trying to help. Please, ‘un-silo me!’”
- Vu-Bang Nguyen, Urban Habitat

Opportunity: With participation from school districts, the existing regional planning process could serve as a framework for inter-jurisdictional and inter-disciplinary collaboration.

The regional Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCSs) present a venue to involve school districts in planning for broader community and regional change and adaptation. Local and regional land use, transportation, and housing planning in California is changing, stemming from state laws such as AB 32 (2006) and SB 375 (2008). A prime goal is to better integrate land use planning with transportation investments, leading to ‘location efficiency,’ less greenhouse gas pollution, and fewer vehicle-miles traveled. This integration requires new planning tools, criteria, practices, and relationships—all of which are underway. The state’s 18 metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are developing SCSs, but, for the most part, without the participation of school districts. Participants noted that, in

some cases, school districts have not been invited into the process, and, even if invited, many districts have not engaged because they do not see the immediate relevance or lack the resources. Ken Alex, Director of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, and others stated that this is a major missing piece in the creation of more sustainable communities. Many aspects of these regional plans have an effect on schools, including the concept of planning and investing in more location-efficient communities. This could lead to more children being able to walk/bike to school, limiting vehicle-miles traveled to/from school, reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, improving student health, reducing busing costs for school districts, and reducing supporting infrastructure cost.

"The SCSs across the state are putting a prioritization on development in transit corridors and already-developed areas. These plans can be difficult to relate to schools given that they cover an entire region and school issues can be very localized. Still, we need to figure out collectively how to make these important linkages."
-Muggs Stoll, San Diego Association of Governments

3. SCHOOL FACILITIES LACK A SUSTAINABLE FUNDING SOURCE, BUT THE RESULTING CHANGES WILL PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES

Challenge: Many school facilities inadequately support health and student achievement and the state's School Facility Program has few funds remaining

Numerous participants noted that too many of California's K-12 schools remain in 'substandard' conditions, and that this hampers education, student and staff health, and community sustainability goals. New research and policy studies increasingly reveal the far-reaching impacts of such conditions, and the first-hand experiences of many symposium participants corroborated this reality. Examples included: campuses with inadequate physical activity spaces, inadequate safe drinking water, poor indoor air quality and/or thermal comfort, inadequate kitchen facilities for fresh food preparation, high building energy consumption/cost, school locations where few children can safely walk or bicycle to school, and schools without the facilities to properly promote science and technology curriculum. The State of California's School Facilities Program, which has provided grants to assist local school districts in a share of the costs of their new construction and modernization projects since 1998, currently lacks new funding. The last statewide K-12 school construction bond was in 2006. The State Allocation Board (which oversees the allocation of these funds) is currently reviewing funding needs and the future role of state funding. Local school districts are limited in their ability to raise capital funds through local bonds by the assessed value of properties in their district.

"We need to ensure all students are successful in school. Our kids deserve a well-rounded holistic education that includes great teachers, challenging curriculum and support systems that nurture learning and their health. Health Happens in Schools because we can't expect better results when kids are sick, hungry, or feel unsafe."

-Judi Larsen, The California Endowment

Opportunity: With the state’s School Facility Program at a critical juncture, an opportunity to improve the program and enhance collaborative planning has emerged.

With the State of California’s School Facilities Program in transition, there are opportunities to review and update funding and policy priorities. Participants noted that these updated priorities should first and foremost promote high-quality education, but their use should also seek to align with the state’s broader infrastructure investment and health equity priorities. Through its funding, policies, and guidelines, the State of California has the opportunity to influence local cross-sector collaborative planning. K-12 infrastructure investments represent a significant policy and funding lever to link education quality, health, and sustainable communities goals. But, as numerous participants stated, this will require both state and local action that emphasizes relationship building and a new approach to working collaboratively, rather than relying upon new policies or mandates. California’s legal structure strongly upholds local control, especially in K-12 education. By working together local and regional agencies can partner to inform school placement and design of surrounding neighborhoods so that communities and the state reap the greatest economic, environmental, and health equity benefits from all sectors of infrastructure investment.

“Education doesn’t happen in a vacuum, it happens in a community. So community quality is so pivotal to educational outcomes.”
-Kathleen Moore,
California Department
of Education

Kathleen Moore of the CDE noted that health and sustainable communities advocates and agency stakeholders should participate in the statewide discussions about a possible future K-12 school construction and renovation bond. If, and when, this happens the state legislature will debate the bond’s funding priorities.

COMMITMENTS & NEXT STEPS

A primary aim of the convening was to explore the state's role in promoting sound local planning. Participants stressed that greater state guidance on local inter-agency planning is needed. State agency leaders from OPR, CDE, and CDPH explored the ways in which their agencies could meet this challenge, namely through the promotion of collaborative local planning and, if possible, building incentives into future state funding streams that intersect schools, planning, and health. Participants identified the following specific opportunities.

LEVERAGE THE UPDATE OF MUNICIPAL GENERAL PLAN GUIDELINES BY THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH

Currently underway (2013), Ken Alex of OPR stated that his office is conducting a thorough update to the municipal General Plan Guidelines. He reported that OPR is engaging the California Department of Education, among others, in this review to ensure that local governments receive appropriate guidance on working together and to potentially provide more specific criteria and/or tools. This partnership also models the inter-agency collaboration that OPR promotes locally. OPR is working to outline the process, which includes opportunities for inter-agency and public input.

"We need to talk more about sustainable development for families. The reality is family housing preferences are changing – people want more flexibility, access to transit, shorter commute times."

-Meea Kang, Domus Development

LEVERAGE THE REVIEW AND UPDATE OF TITLE 5 (CA CODE OF REGULATIONS ON SCHOOL FACILITIES) BY THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

In 2013, CDE intends to begin a review of Title 5, which contains the state's educational standards on school facility planning and siting for local school districts. The Title 5 review and update coincides with OPR's General Plan Guidelines update. Kathleen Moore of CDE, Connie Mitchell of CDPH, and Ken Alex of OPR agreed that this is a window of opportunity for inter-agency collaboration.

"Where you build a school is always controversial. It's even more difficult and controversial in already developed areas. Local government partnerships could really help this."

-Joe Dixon, Santa Ana Unified School District

"Schools and communities go hand in hand. There is a great disparity in those that have great schools and those that do not. We need to come up with a system that promotes equity."

-Tim White, Oakland Unified School District

PROVIDE RESOURCES FOR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS ON SB 375 AND THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGIES

CDE and OPR noted that they will partner to develop resources and technical assistance to assist local school districts in understanding why and how to participate in local land use planning and the Sustainable Communities Strategy processes. In particular, Kathleen Moore of the CDE noted that school districts could benefit from guidance on how to work with MPOs. These regional agencies conduct comprehensive data modeling of housing, population, and transportation, and these data could be extremely useful for school districts' enrollment planning, if it were made available. MPOs are well-positioned to inform questions of future school facility capacity needs. Stakeholders also noted the important role that the various policy advocacy organizations working in health, sustainable communities, and/or education can play in this regard.

"We're seeing great new local government partnerships in Southern California around joint use. With cost sharing, we can all bring something to the table."

-Eloisa Gonzalez, Los Angeles County Office of Public Health

"Sprawl is driving our city to bankruptcy. Schools have to be with us in the conversation to stop sprawl. We cannot afford them not to be."

-Keith Berghold, City of Fresno

LEVERAGE THE INTER-AGENCY EFFORTS OF THE HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES TASK FORCE

OPR and CDE represent two of the 18 agencies, offices, and departments that serve on California's Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force. Facilitated and staffed by CDPH, the Task Force provides an opportunity that is unique in the U.S. for cross-sectoral collaboration at the state level to advance health and sustainability. Through the Task Force, CDE, OPR, and CDPH commit to a range of priorities, such as incorporating a health and health equity perspective into state guidance, and promoting active transportation through implementation of "complete streets" and opportunities presented by SB 375. These efforts serve to support healthy local and regional policy-making and provide a policy environment at the state level that prioritizes collaboration and co-benefits, which is necessary to achieve shared goals around health equity, educational outcomes, and environmental sustainability. Connie Mitchell of CDPH noted the important role that OPR's Complete Streets Guidelines, for example, could play in both the General Plan Guidelines and Title 5 updates.

INFORM THE STATE ALLOCATION BOARD REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL FACILITIES PROGRAM

The State Allocation Board has established a program review committee that will make recommendations regarding the state's investment priorities for K-12 infrastructure. These efforts will inform the legislative debates over the possibility—and priorities—of a future statewide K-12 school construction bond. CDE, OPR, and CDPH representatives stated that their inter-agency work described above should also respond to important questions raised by the review of state-level school facilities funding: How do we get the best value from these investments? How can we incentivize energy efficiency, renovations to older schools in need of upgrades, modern technologies, and new schools with innovative learning environments? Can these state funds provide promote increased local collaborative planning?

CONCLUSION

This paper summarizes the main ideas provided by participants during our policy symposium on December 6, 2012. A common thread was repeatedly illustrated by stakeholders: there is not just one story of the interactions between health, education, and land use sectors in communities and school districts across California. Kathleen Moore of the CDE described how her office is fielding daily requests from local school districts on everything from school closure to new school siting to major renovations—sometimes even from the same school district or neighboring ones. Both regional economic factors and regional planning efforts influence how these trends are experienced. Finding success amidst this fluctuating environment will require innovative local solutions to local challenges, but that success will be positively shaped by consistent and sound state guidance and incentives.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR CITIES & SCHOOLS

The Center for Cities & Schools at the University of California, Berkeley is an action-oriented, policy and technical assistance center, whose mission is to promote high-quality education as an essential component of urban and metropolitan vitality to create equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities for all.

<http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/>

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RESOURCES TO INFORM POLICY AND PRACTICE REFORMS

California's K-12 Educational Infrastructure Investments: Leveraging the State's Role for Quality School Facilities in Sustainable Communities. This 2012 UC Berkeley report takes a comprehensive look at the state of K-12 school facilities in California, focusing on state-level policies and funding patterns. The recommendations lay out a detailed framework that re-envision the state's role in K-12 infrastructure to appropriately support educational quality and contribute to healthy, sustainable communities goals. <http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/reports/CCS2012CAK12facilities.pdf>

Smart Schools for Sustainable Communities: Aligning Sustainable Communities Planning and Public Education in California (Invited Policy Roundtable Summary). This 2010 UC Berkeley report summarizes findings from a policy symposium held in partnership the California Strategic Growth Council and the California Department of Education. Local and state leaders gathered to discuss promising strategies for linking public schools to the creation of healthy, sustainable communities, including integrating schools into regional Sustainable Communities Strategies and local planning activities, school siting and design, and green construction. This event was a precursor to the 2012 symposium. <http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/reports/SGC%20Smart%20Schools%20Report%202010%20FINAL.pdf>

Growth & Opportunity: Aligning High-Quality Public Education & Sustainable Communities Planning in the Bay Area. This UC Berkeley report for the Association of Bay Area Governments informs local and regional innovation connecting schools to the Bay Area's regional development and conservation strategy (FOCUS) and the Sustainable Communities Strategy as mandated by California's climate change legislation, Senate Bill 375 (2008). The report identifies tangible policy levers at both the regional and municipal levels that realize the co-benefits of pursuing complete communities and high-quality education in tandem. http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/reports/ccs-focus_policy_report_final_june2011.pdf

California General Plan Guidelines. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research is reviewing and updating the state's General Plan Guidelines in 2013. http://opr.ca.gov/s_generalplanguidelines.php

Health in all Policies Task Force (HiAP)

Recognizing the impact that non-health policies have on health, as well as the complex relationship between sustainability and health, the State of California created a Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force in 2010 and placed it under the auspices of the Strategic Growth Council. The SGC designated 18 State agencies, departments, and offices to participate, and appointed the California Department of Public Health to facilitate the Task Force. In December 2010, the Health in All Policies Task Force produced a full report of findings and recommendations:

http://www.sgc.ca.gov/hiap/docs/publications/HiAP_Task_Force_Report.pdf

California Code of Regulations, Title 5 § 14001-14030

School districts must meet the state standards on school facilities, as outlined in Title 5. California Department of Education is conducting a review and possible update of Title 5 in 2013. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/sf/title5regs.asp>

State of California Planning Priorities

Government Code § 65041.1 (established with 2002's AB 857) outlines the state's planning priorities, which are "intended to promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and promote public health and safety in the state, including in urban, suburban, and rural communities."

<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=gov&group=65001-66000&file=65041-65049>

Forum on School Siting Collaboration in Sacramento: Using a Slowdown to Get Ahead.

This 2008 report by the Local Government Commission provides a summary of a convening of Sacramento area stakeholders representing cities, school districts, and others on ways to improve new school siting land use decisions.

http://www.lgc.org/freepub/docs/community_design/reports/sacramento_school_siting_forum_may2008.pdf

Arizona Active School Neighborhood (ASNC) Checklist.

This tool, developed by the Arizona Department Transportation and other state agencies, is designed for school districts to work with other local agencies to assess proposed or existing school sites based on their walkability and bikeability. Locals receive points in state funding applications for completing the ASNC.

<https://activeschoolchecklist.com>

Smart Growth, Community Planning and Public School Construction: Models and Guidelines. This 2008 report by the Maryland Department of Planning in collaboration with other state agencies is "intended for all parties involved in the public school facility planning and siting process as well as local land use officials." It provides state guidance and recommendations on key issues involved in public school construction, community planning and smart growth in support of the Maryland's Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Act in Maryland, laying out a template for integrating school planning, funding and school design with community planning, public health, walkability, energy efficiency, co-location, and transportation choices and costs.

<http://planning.maryland.gov/PDF/OurProducts/Publications/ModelsGuidelines/mg27.pdf>

Voluntary School Siting Guidelines. In 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released the voluntary school siting guidelines to help local school districts community members evaluate environmental factors to make the best possible school siting decisions.

<http://www.epa.gov/schools/siting/>