

Re: Letter of Support for Sustainable Schools in California

Dear Superintendents:

We are writing to encourage you to explore how your school district can benefit from using high performance designs when constructing or modernizing school facilities. Across the state and nation, school districts are discovering the advantages of building high performance schools that are energy efficient, comfortable, and promote student learning. Benefits include improved student and teacher health, heightened student performance, decreased operating costs, and lower absenteeism.

School districts are finding that building high performance schools also makes good business sense. An October 2006 report released by Capital-E, titled "Greening America's Schools: Costs and Benefits" documents the financial benefits of a high performance schools. The report can be downloaded at <http://www.cap-e.com/ewebeditpro/items/O59F9819.pdf>.

Early planning in the design phase of new construction and modernization projects and clear direction from the school district to the design team have been found to minimize cost premiums. When additional costs do exist, these may be offset by the new \$100 million High Performance School Program offered by the State Allocation Board (SAB). These funds have been made available through the recently approved bond measure, Proposition 1D, which allows the SAB to increase the base new construction per pupil grant from 2 to 9 percent, dependent on how well the school design is expected to perform. Incentive programs are also available through other sources, such as the state's electric and water utility companies.

We would also like to bring to your attention the Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that can be a tremendous help to you as you assess your school facility options. CHPS provides school districts and their design teams the essential tools to build energy efficient, healthy, productive, and environmentally sustainable facilities. These tools include information, services, and incentives to assist school districts with planning and designing new facilities or modernizing existing facilities. For example, CHPS makes available, at no cost, a series of Best Practices Manuals which can be downloaded at www.chps.net. When deciding upon what criteria to use for the new High Performance School Program, the SAB selected the CHPS standards due to the organization's expertise in California school construction.

School districts throughout the state and the nation have adopted the CHPS criteria and use the Best Practices Manuals as a reference guide. We encourage your district to use the services CHPS has to offer. If you would like further information about the benefits of high performance schools or the CHPS criteria, please visit their website or contact Charles Eley, CHPS Executive Director at charles@chps.net.

Thank you for your assistance in building more energy efficient, environmentally sustainable schools that will promote student learning for the next generation of California students.

Sincerely,



Alan Bersin
California Secretary of Education



Jackalyne Pfannenstiel, Chair
CHPS Board
California Energy Commission



David F. Thorman, AIA
State Architect