Message From The Chair

Cathy Allen, C.A.S.H. Chair

C.A.S.H. – A Leader in Schools and Seismic Safety

Since stating as C.A.S.H. Chair just a few months ago, I have hit the ground running as I have worked with the Board and staff on the significant policy issues before our organiza-

tion. With 2011 already half over, I wanted to update our members on what C.A.S.H. is doing to protect and enhance school facility funding and programs at the state level. This Message from the Chair will focus on the implications of state budget deliberations for school facilities, legislation that C.A.S.H. advocates are currently working on, as well as an update about the Superintendent of Public Instruction’s Schools of the Future Initiative.

Governor’s May Revision
The Governor released his May Revision on May 16. While the May Revision did not provide additional information on the status of a statewide school bond in 2012, the impact of “flexibility” on Deferred Maintenance Program (DMP) funding, or additional Emergency Repair Program (ERP) funding, it does reference the Administration’s policy concerning state debt service, which has implications for the timing and amount of the next state bond sale.

Specifically, the Governor’s May Revision states that, “The modest decrease in General Obligation debt service reflects a workload reduction as a result of a lower projected need for a Fall bond sale and associated interest savings... In an effort to ensure additional bonds are issued only when necessary, the Department of Finance will work with departments and agencies, in concert with the State Treasurer’s Office, over the next several months to more closely evaluate existing cash balances and reported future bond cash needs.” While it is clear that the Administration continues to be concerned about limiting state debt service, it is a positive sign that they still plan to sell bonds in the Fall of 2011 in light of the uncertainty surrounding the State Budget. C.A.S.H. will continue to advocate selling bonds in the Fall of 2011 in an amount sufficient to fund approved-but-unfunded school facility projects.

Legislation 2011
C.A.S.H. has weighed in on many bills of interest to its members, but our advocates have focused their efforts on opposing bills that we believe would have a negative effect on school district’s ability to build and modernize schools. The following is a brief summary of four bills that C.A.S.H. opposed or currently opposes, and that our advocates are currently focused on improving:

SB 118 (Yee) - Bidding/Green Equipment
This bill requires school districts to use low bid for acquisition of energy-saving and sustainability equipment. Current law allows school districts to acquire energy-saving and sustainability equipment without advertising for bid. This bill died in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

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SB 474 (Evans) - Indemnity/Construction Contracts
This bill prohibits indemnification provision in contracts between school districts and contractors and between contractors and subcontractors. This bill has passed the Senate.

SB 600 (Rubio) – Pre-Qualification
This bill requires school districts and county offices of education to utilize the prequalification process when advertising for bid. This bill is in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 1342 (Dickinson) – School Roofs
This bill would have made specified changes to the process of bidding a school roof. C.A.S.H. opposed this bill and I testified in opposition to the bill on behalf of C.A.S.H., arguing that it would negatively impact schools’ ability to wisely spend taxpayer dollars and that the current process works. AB 1342 died in the Assembly Business, Professions and Consumer Protection Committee on May 4.

Schools of the Future
As I have previously reported, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) has convened his Schools of the Future Initiative which is an effort to look beyond the current parameters of the School Facility Program (SFP) to envision short and long-term recommendations to improve the program. The subject matter committees have been meeting to develop their recommendations which are due by June 1. I have been privileged to be part of this effort, representing C.A.S.H., and I look forward to working with Superintendent Torlakson and his capable staff to develop recommendations to improve the current approval and funding process.

I look forward to hearing from you on any of the issues I have outlined above or issues that may be of concern to you in your school facilities world. Please contact me at (916) 971-7700 or cathy.allen@sanjuan.edu.