Policy 7150: Site Selection And Development **Status:** ADOPTED

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CSBA NOTE: Education Code 17070.10-17077.10 sets forth eligibility requirements for the receipt of state facilities funds under the Leroy F. Greene School Facilities Act of 1998 (Proposition 1A). As a condition for receipt of the funds, Education Code 17070.50 requires districts to obtain written approval from the California Department of Education (CDE) and certify to the State Allocation Board that the district's site selection and building plans comply with the regulations developed by CDE, pursuant to Education Code 17251(b) and (c). In addition, Education Code 17070.50 requires the district to certify that the services of an architect, a structural engineer, or other design professional has been selected using a competitive process consistent with Government Code 4526. See BP/AR 7140 - Architectural and Engineering Services.

The Governing Board believes that a school site should serve the district's educational needs in accordance with the district's master plan, as well as show potential for contributing to other community needs.

The Board recognizes the importance of community input in the site selection process. To this end, the Board will solicit community input whenever a school site is to be selected and shall provide public notice and hold public hearings in accordance with law.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a site selection process which complies with law and ensures that the best possible sites are acquired and developed in a cost-effective manner.

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 17211, districts are required to ensure that property acquired for a new school or an addition to an existing school site meets standards for school site selection as specified in 5 CCR 14010-14012.

Before acquiring property for a new school or an addition to an existing school site, the Board, at a public hearing, shall either evaluate the property using state site selection standards specified in 5 CCR 14010 or, if a district advisory committee was appointed to evaluate the property, receive the committee's report of findings based on those standards. (Education Code 17211, 17251)

Environmental Impact Investigation for the Site Selection Process

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Public Resources Code 21082, districts are mandated to adopt procedures for the evaluation of all projects (beyond just site selection) and the preparation of environmental impact reports and negative declarations required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In order to satisfy this mandate, the district may either (1) adopt the actual CEQA guidelines, as applicable, as its own procedure, (2) adopt the county or city guidelines, (3) or develop its own procedure. In most cases, the district's environmental investigation will conclude with a simultaneous public review of both the environmental documentation and, if applicable, the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) documents.

Pursuant to Public Resources Code 21092 and 21092.2, as amended by AB 819 (Ch. 97, Statutes of 2021), when CEQA requires a draft environmental impact report, environmental impact report, negative declaration, or mitigated negative declaration (environmental review documents), the

district is required to post on its web site those environmental review documents, and public notice of the preparation and availability of such documents. The district must email specified notices when written requests for notices have been filed. See Exhibit 1113-District and School Web Sites and the accompanying administrative regulation.

The following paragraph provides for the use of CEQA guidelines for the evaluation of all projects, including site selection. Districts that have adopted the city/county guidelines or their own procedure should modify the paragraph accordingly.

The Superintendent or designee shall determine whether any proposed development project is subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and shall ensure compliance with this Act, including any web site posting requirements. When evaluating district projects, the CEQA guidelines shall be used.

Environmental review documents, including a draft environmental impact report, environmental impact report, negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration, and public notice of the preparation and availability of such documents, shall be posted on the district's web site. (Public Resources Code 21082.1, 21092, 21092.2)

Agricultural Land

CSBA NOTE: In 82 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 130 (1999), the Attorney General opined that a district may construct a school on land designated by a county ordinance for "agricultural, open space or rural land use." However, the Board must, by a two-thirds vote pursuant to Government Code 53094, render the ordinance inapplicable to the proposed use of the property. See 9323.2 - Actions by the Board. The exemption can be blocked only by a court determination that the action was "arbitrary and capricious."

If the proposed site is in an area designated in a city, county, or city and county general plan for agricultural use and zoned for agricultural production, the Board shall determine all of the following: (Education Code 17215.5)

1. That the district has notified and consulted with the city, county, or city and county within which the prospective site is to be located

2. That the Board has evaluated the final site selection based on all factors affecting the public interest and not limited to selection on the basis of the cost of the land

3. That the district shall attempt to minimize any public health and safety issues resulting from the neighboring agricultural uses that may affect students and employees at the site