

EDUCATION: LEGISLATIVE ANALYST URGES STATE TO ADOPT BETTER APPROACH TO ADDRESS DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AT SCHOOL FACILITIES

California education administrators are letting public school facilities run down by not providing adequate maintenance, according to a report from the legislative analyst.

At K-12 schools, the cost to fix schools is unknown, but likely several billion dollars, the analyst estimates. According to the analyst, at the community colleges, the tab is \$1 million; at California State University (CSU) campuses, deferred maintenance cost is pegged at \$1.8 billion; and at the University of California system, the cost is unknown, but likely is several billion dollars.

Taxpayers have provided billions of dollars to build these structures, mainly through bonds, while also providing billions of dollars a year to pay for educators' salaries, benefits and pensions. Now, educators are – or will be – coming back to taxpayers requesting billions more because they have failed to maintain the properties adequately.

In the 2014-15 state budget, Governor Jerry Brown requests approximately \$190 million for just “low performing” K-12 schools' deferred maintenance, and \$87 million for community colleges. The governor proposes that the CSU campuses fund maintenance within their budgets, and he provides no new proposal for the UC system.

In an April 11 report, the legislative analyst said: “While we believe dedicating one-time funding for deferred maintenance makes sense, we are concerned that the Governor's package does not apply consistent criteria for how much maintenance funding to provide each education segment. The Governor's proposals do not appear to consider the existing maintenance practices at each segment, the degree to which each segment's deferred maintenance backlog currently is being addressed, or the size of each segment's backlog.”

The analyst is very critical of the governor's CSU proposal, saying it “would greatly diminish the Legislature's role in reviewing maintenance and capital projects as well as make statewide infrastructure planning even more difficult.”

In California, there are about 10,000 K-12 school sites, and most have multiple buildings that must be maintained. There are 112 community colleges, 31 CSU facilities (23 campuses and 8 centers), and 10 UC campuses, all with multiple buildings.

According to the analyst, there is no long-term plan for eliminating existing deferred maintenance. (**CalTax:** Nor does there appear to be a plan to stop more maintenance from being deferred. It is shocking that public officials are allowing taxpayer-financed infrastructure to deteriorate.)