

California Department of Education
Supporting America’s School Infrastructure
Program Narrative

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Supporting America's School Infrastructure

Need for the Project

Severity of the problem

Facilities work is complex. Small school districts (SSDs) face numerous facility related challenges, ranging from aging buildings or a lack of modern technology infrastructure to low energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. Additionally, there are potential health hazards connected to inadequate maintenance of facilities. Managing school facilities requires knowledge of California laws that impact school facilities; subject matter expertise as it pertains to facilities' project management skills, including cost-estimating and forecasting; and contract negotiation and management expertise.

It is difficult for SSDs to recruit and retain qualified facilities personnel with the needed expertise to manage and maintain school facilities. Due to minimal administrative staff within these SSDs superintendents are often required to fill a wider range of roles, including, but not limited to, acquiring the necessary knowledge to address the continual maintenance and modernization of their facilities, as well as acquiring the necessary financing for new construction and modernization projects.

In addition to staffing challenges, many of these SSDs have student demographic profiles reflective of the State's student population in general. Approximately 6 in 10 California students face socioeconomic challenges related to family income, homelessness, living in a migratory household, and/or involvement with the foster care system, and nearly 1 in 5 have limited English proficiency. California recognizes that opportunity is not yet equal for students, in California classrooms and that school

facilities directly affect students' academic achievement. Unlike larger school districts, SSDs are required to do more with less resources. It is necessary that California supports these high-need districts and schools for all students to be provided safe, healthy, sustainable, and equitable learning environments.

Fifty-eight percent of California's districts are SSDs, with enrollment below 2,500 students. They generally have fewer resources to address school facility needs. In April 2018, the Center for Cities and Schools at the University of California, Berkeley published [*Small Districts Big Challenges: Barriers to Planning and Funding School Facilities California's Rural and Small Public-School Districts*](#). The report made several findings that highlighted the special facility challenges that SSDs—many of them rural—face.

- 72% of the school districts in the bottom quintile of capital outlay are small, with average daily attendance (ADA) at or below 2,500 students.
- 59% of rural school districts have made emergency repairs in the last 5 years.
- 51% of rural school districts are not able to consistently budget enough each year for facility cleaning, upkeep, and maintenance.
- 48% of rural school districts do not have a dedicated facility director.
- 44% of rural school districts have not done any modernization projects in the last 5 years.
- 36% of rural school districts have not investigated whether or not they would qualify for the State's Facility Hardship Program.

- Among small and rural school district administrators, lack of funding was the most often cited [facilities] challenge followed by “lack of knowledge, complexity, and staff limits.”

Many SSDs have limited financial capacity to fund facility projects through local funding mechanisms. According to the [Small Districts, Big Challenges](#) report, many small and rural districts often lack the assessed property values of larger and/or urban districts, thus limiting their local bonding capacity. As a result, their financial capacities are not sufficient to cover the cost of major projects. Additionally, small and rural administrators reported that even when they do wish to pursue local facility bonds, they do not know where to start and the process to do so is expensive and complicated. The following two quotes from the report stand out:

- “I don’t have enough bonding capacity in my jurisdiction to build a portable.”
- “Our bonding capacity is so small that by the time we pay the underwriters, the lawyers, and other fees, we will not have enough money to get any [facility] benefits.”

Many SSDs have limited staff capacity to pursue state funding opportunities. These districts struggle to determine school sites or district-wide eligibility for state facility funding programs or to navigate the application processes. In addition, applications for funding are considered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Consequently, districts with the largest staff capacity—who also tend to have more local funding options—are usually first in line. Because of their funding challenges, small districts are unable to move their projects forward while they wait for their applications to be processed. In January 2022, the Acting California State Auditor informed the California Governor and Legislature that

the first-come, first-serve approach for reviewing and approving funding for projects

“disadvantages school districts that are unable to advance their projects with their own local funds while waiting for state funding.” ([Source](#))

The California Department of Education (CDE) has limited capacity, if any, to assist SSDs. California is geographically vast. Its 8 counties cover over 163,000 square miles and house 939 school districts, with over 9,000 school sites. It is logistically challenging for the CDE to provide services to districts on so large a scale.

Currently, the responsibility of ensuring that school districts meet the site acquisition and school design standards outlined in Title 5, *California Code of Regulations*, sections 14001-14036, is shared with just six field staff representatives, for the entire state, within CDE’s School Facilities and Transportation Services Division (SFTSD). The current composition of SFTSD’s field staff primarily comes from the classroom and not a construction background; therefore, the representatives do not have the training nor expertise to assess school buildings for needed repairs for school districts, nor to provide targeted assistance to SSDs’ facility needs.

Severe inequities faced by Small School Districts in addressing facility needs.

Most of the superintendents and/or principals leading more than half of California’s school districts lack sufficient personnel to fully support their facility needs and lack the training to take on the role themselves, even if they had the time to do so. The reasoning behind this could be attributed to the funding methodology based on student enrollment often resulting in less funding for specialized administrative work in smaller school districts. A comparison of the organizational structure of differently sized school

districts illustrates this disparity. The CDE interviewed the Superintendents of Maple Elementary School District (ESD) and Coalinga-Huron Unified School District (USD) and collected data from two larger districts (Folsom-Cordova and Elk Grove USDs) as points of comparison.

School Districts	Maple ESD	Coalinga-Huron USD	Folsom-Cordova USD	Elk Grove USD
Number of Schools	1	11	36	68
Pupil Enrollment	294	4,448	21,067	61,672
Maintenance Staff	1.5	10	25	78
Facilities Staff	0	3	4	10
Construction Staff	0	0	4	6

Coalinga-Huron USD (CHUSD) has a department dedicated to addressing the facilities maintenance needs of the district. CHUSD reports that their maintenance staff includes two electricians, two plumbers, two heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) specialists, two general maintenance, and one safety officer, plus over 25 custodial staff members. CHUSD’s maintenance director and his staff of two oversee the districts facility operations and projects. The staff has expertise in “mapping it out,” as Superintendent Lori Villanueva explained. The organizational structure to support school facilities starts with the Assistant Superintendent of Business, then with the Director of Maintenance and two support staff members, continuing onto the Maintenance Supervisor and nine specialists.

By comparison, Maple Elementary School District (MESD) has 2.5 full-time employees (FTEs) supporting the Superintendent, which includes a full-time Maintenance Supervisor (with a specialty in welding), one part-time maintenance worker, and one full-time custodial worker, to assess a myriad of buildings and infrastructure needs. The

MESD Superintendent serves as the district's only resource in evaluating the complexity of California's School Facilities Program (SFP). Former MESD Superintendent Julie Boesch shared that she had no knowledge of how to address school facilities infrastructure projects before she began her superintendency, and neither did any other district staff members. Superintendent Boesch's administrative support staff was never trained in identifying sources of funding nor in creating construction contracts. The responsibility fell squarely on Boesch, and it took her a couple of years to "learn the system" because she didn't know where to start. Yet, all the functions required to successfully run and manage a school district must be achieved, and without specific support for facilities planning, superintendents are often expected to take on that role themselves.

Opportunities addressed by the proposed project

The opportunities provided by the Supporting American's School Infrastructure (SASI) Grant Program will allow California to address the gaps SSDs face. For the purpose of this grant, California's definition of "high-need" represents approximately 165 SSD schools that have been prioritized based on three criteria, including those districts with (1) enrollment under 2,500, (2) has had no participation in California's SFP in the last ten years, and (3) those with students who meet income or categorical eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price meals, are English Language Learners, or are foster youth. The direct services provided will assist these schools in assessing their facility needs, generating cost estimates for the work, and providing guidance on options and resources for funding facility improvements. These direct services will serve as a data collection strategy to identify knowledge and skill gaps related to facilities

management of SSD administrators. The CDE will use these iterative needs assessment processes to design easy-to-use tools and accessible training that will be available to all SSDs. In order to increase these opportunities for SSDs, the CDE will hire one new permanent, full-time employee within the SFTSD to sustain the ongoing development of tools and training, and to biannually convene county or regional conversations on small school facilities management, in collaboration with selected county offices of education (COEs).

Need	Opportunity
Training: SSD leaders have limited training and time for facility management.	The project will result in training at no cost to districts focused on deferred maintenance management.
Tools: There are few tools to assist SSDs with facility-related tasks.	The project will result in downloadable, adaptable, and fillable tools that are easy to use.
Network of support: SSDs often have limited staff and can be geographically isolated.	The project will result in sustained communities of practice for school facilities professionals at the county or regional level.
Funding resources guidance: Limited support for state or federal funding processes or for identifying region, local funding opportunities.	The project will result in guidance on Federal and State funding applications for facility funding and regional or county specific resource lists for facility funding projects from non-governmental sources.

Project Design

The goal of the project is to increase the CDE’s capacity to better support school districts—particularly SSDs—in their ability to address deferred maintenance and facility

needs. Our project design is organized into five parts: (1) Design Concept; (2) Coherent and Sustained Program of Training in the Field; (3) Project Partners and Support; (4) Project Sustainability; and (5) Design Rationale.

Design Concept

The project design is to engage SSDs, COEs, researchers, subject matter experts (SMEs), and nonprofit agencies in an iterative process of: (A) designing tools and training; (B) developing direct technical assistance demonstrating the use of tools for assessing facilities; (C) establishing community-based learning conversations to collectively share knowledge. These three activities are self-reinforcing, each one contributing to the other two. This design was created in consultation with COE facilities staff, a school facilities specialist, a retired facilities director, and a former SSD superintendent.

(A) Designing tools and training

To build knowledge and skills in assessing facility maintenance needs, the CDE, with input from field contractors, COE staff, and CDE field representatives, will design tools for use by SSD leaders to assess their facility needs. The development of these tools will inform the process for targeted technical assistance and serve as content for learning conversations. These tools will include, but are not limited to, a standardized work order system, a routine deferred maintenance task system, a facility needs analysis toolkit, sample maintenance schedules, an overview of the Facilities Inspection Toolkit (FIT), and a cost estimator. Online resources will include a CDE portal for finding and applying for federal grant funding for facilities and the ABC's of establishing

eligibility and applying for California's SFP.

The CDE will develop synchronous and asynchronous training to meet the needs of SSD leaders and administrators and anticipates a variety of training delivery approaches, including reading, videos, pre-recorded presentations, as well as both remote and in-person live training. The CDE has the infrastructure to host learning opportunities, including a dedicated website for the SFTSD to post training resources, as well as the capacity for remote live training through online platforms.

The design of the training will be a key element of the iterative process of design and feedback, with each cohort providing input on the design of the tools and training needed.

(B) Developing direct technical assistance for demonstrating the use of tools for assessing facilities.

The direct technical assistance to school district leaders will consist of explaining and demonstrating the use of tools for assessing facilities. As SSD leaders participate, their feedback will inform the design of the tools for possible revision and help in identifying the knowledge or skill gaps that should be addressed in training.

During direct services, to address the lack of a statewide inventory of school facilities, field contractors and/or CDE field representatives will collect basic district- and school-level facility data to support and inform the development of a custom data system that will allow districts to submit and manage their required

school building data. This data, which is not currently collected, will help to inform the State Legislature on the scope of funding needed for school facilities.

(C) Establishing community-based learning conversations

After the completion of the field services for each cohort, learning conversations will be initiated at the county or multi-county level in collaboration with one or more COEs, with invitations extended to all school districts within the county or counties, to expand the learning beyond those districts receiving direct assistance. These conversations will facilitate the creation of additional tools and services that are required by the SSDs to overcome their current facility challenges.

Coherent and sustained program of training in the field

The training developed throughout the grant period will be sustained through three core strategies. These resources and activities provide an opportunity to expand California's level of support to all SSDs in meeting their facilities needs.

- A suite of synchronous and asynchronous training that will be available to districts on the SFTSD website.
- A new full-time CDE staff position dedicated to supporting SSDs, responsible for updating tools and training, and convening regional learning conversations.
- Learning conversations convened at regular intervals at the county/regional level for SSD leaders. The initial structure of these conversations will include:
 - Case studies of participating districts, demonstrating the process of facilities assessment and cost estimation.

- Question-and-answer sessions for all participants to ask clarifying questions, brainstorm strategies, and share resources for addressing facility challenges.
- Feedback on training and tools for revision and improvement on policies and funding applications.
- Presentations on county/regional non-governmental funding sources.
- Tutorials on applying for state facility funding programs.

Project partners and support

The learning conversations will be supported by two key partners, one of which is the Small School Districts Association ([SSDA](#)). “The mission of the Small School Districts’ Association is to provide relevant information and proactive assistance to small school district governing boards and superintendents through legislative advocacy, collaboration, professional development, and support services.” Its membership includes 20 of the 27 counties where the 105 districts proposed for direct technical assistance are located. The SSDA will collaborate with the CDE and COEs in promoting and convening the learning conversations. In addition, the California County Superintendents (CCS) organization provides support to the 58 county superintendents and will assist in the development of direct communication to all counties in California. The outcome of these conversations will address the needs and provide increased value for the SSDs. It is also envisioned that Kern and Tulare COEs, both instrumental in the design concept, will aid the CDE in the development of training and tools, along with actively partnering to address the needs of all SSDs.

Sustaining the training. Once initiated, these conversations will be convened twice annually by the new full-time SFTSD staff member, in collaboration with the CCS, selected COEs, and the SSDA.

Our application includes letters of support from:

- California State Superintendent of Public Instruction and State Board of Education, President
- California Collaborative for Educational Excellence
- California County Superintendents Association
- Small School District Association
- Del Norte Unified School District/County Office of Education
- Fresno County Office of Education
- Kern County Office of Education
- Tulare County Office of Education
- Anderson Valley Unified School District
- Buttonwillow Union School District
- Capay Joint Union Elementary School District
- Lake School District
- Pond Union Elementary School District
- Semitropic School District
- Dr. Julie Boesch, former Maple Unified School District Superintendent

Project sustainability

By the conclusion of the grant, the CDE's staff will have developed the capacity to sustain the work, measurable in the following ways:

- *Increased capacity of existing staff.* CDE field representatives currently lack experience in training, assessing, and cost-estimating deferred maintenance and facility needs. By observing school visits with contractors, participating in learning conversations, and developing and testing tools, field representatives will acquire an initial understanding of the knowledge and skills that can be developed beyond the end of the grant period.
- *New staff position.* The CDE will hire one new, full-time employee dedicated to supporting SSDs with facility maintenance questions and requests. The FTE will also maintain all tools and training materials.
- *Increased data.* The CDE will have collected baseline data on school facilities from the initial 165 “high-need” schools. The data will help inform the processes that will be used in the future to collect additional data from all school sites in California, as well as the development of a database to store and analyze this information.
- *Continued regional activity with CCS, COEs, and SSDA.*

The combination of increased staff capacity, a new staff position, and a sustained partnership with CCS, SSDA and continued COE collaboration will allow the CDE to sustain and improve, by cultivating a collection of school facility maintenance tools and resources.

Design Rationale

The project design is founded on three key principles:

1. *Subsidiarity.* Problem solving should involve those closest to the challenge, (i.e., local stakeholders) rather than higher or more central levels of organization.

2. *Quality learning*. The learning is job-embedded and organized into learning communities. ([Source](#))
3. *Collective impact*. Large, complex problems can rarely be solved by any one organization. Research shows that successful collective impact efforts typically have five conditions that produce true alignment and lead to powerful results. ([Source](#))
 - i. A common agenda: SSD facility maintenance needs
 - ii. Shared measurement systems: Common tools for assessment
 - iii. Mutually reinforcing activities
 - iv. Continuous communication: Learning conversations
 - v. Backbone support organizations: CCSA, COEs, and SSDA

Services

High-need districts and underserved populations

The CDE identified an initial group of 152 school districts serving 82,175 students in 371 schools and 110 charter schools across the State as “high-need” based on three criteria:

1. *Unduplicated count above 50 percent*. The unduplicated count refers to the unduplicated count of pupils who: (a) are English Language Learners; (b) meet income or categorical eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program; or (c) are foster youth. “Unduplicated count” means that each pupil is counted only once, even if the pupil meets more

than one of these criteria. The percentage of students that constitute the districts' unduplicated count ranges from 53 to 100 percent and is summarized here:

Number of Districts	Number of Schools	Number of Students	Unduplicated Count Range	Unduplicated Count Average
38	78	21,658	90-100%	95.30%
51	135	29,378	75-89%	82.40%
63	158	31,139	50-74%	65.60%
152	371	82,175	N/A	N/A

2. *Enrollment under 2,500.* As articulated in *Need for the Project* section, SSDs often lack sufficient funds to offer competitive salaries to recruit and retain qualified facilities personnel. They have limited capacity to fund facility projects through local funding mechanisms and limited staff capacity to pursue state funding opportunities. This project is designed to provide technical assistance and tools specifically to these small districts to overcome these barriers.
3. *No participation in California's SFP* in the last ten years. Through the SFP, the State Allocation Board approves state funding to assist in the costs related to school district construction projects based on eligibility. While SSDs have state funding eligibility for their modernization projects, they have not taken advantage of this program and continue to rely on limited local funds to address their facility needs. As noted in *Need for Project*, the Acting California State Auditor reported in January 2022 that the first-come, first-serve approach for reviewing and approving funding for projects unfairly disadvantaged SSDs. ([Source](#))

Scaling the project

Because of California’s immense size, the CDE limited the scope of work to be logistically achievable given the complexity of the work, time, and distance constraints, as well as an unknown number and location of potential contractors. The CDE estimates, with the grant resources and the five-year time frame, direct services will be provided to approximately 165 schools in 105 districts across 23 counties, almost 40 percent of California’s 58 counties. The seven cohorts have been established based on regional and county level affiliation, that share similar topography and climate that can impact school maintenance and facility needs.

Counties	Cohort	District Count	Schools to Visit	Grant Period
Kern, Tulare (2)	1	19	20	Q1-2 2025
Fresno, Kings, Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara (5)	2	17	25	Q3-4 2025
Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tuolumne (4)	3	15	25	Q1-2 2026
Humboldt, Siskiyou, Trinity, Del Norte (4)	4	23	25	Q3-4 2026
Lassen, Modoc (2)	5	7	20	Q1-2 2027
Shasta, Tehama (2)	6	12	25	Q3-4 2027
Inyo, San Bernardino, Riverside, Imperial (4)	7	12	25	Q1-2 2028
Total: 23	N/A	105	165	N/A

Services Provided

The CDE will provide identified schools with targeted assistance in three key functions of school facility management: (1) identifying and cost-estimating facility needs; (2) contracting for facility work; and (3) identifying and pursuing funding for facility projects.

This service will be provided by contracted SMEs, who will visit schools in districts organized by cohorts at the county level, as outlined above. For each site visit, the SMEs will support SSDs from a menu of services tailored to each school's needs. By providing this direct technical assistance, selected schools will have their projects identified, and documents needed to support their applications for funding from a variety of sources. This will make them more competitive with larger districts already well versed in facility management and funding needs. These services may include, but are not limited to:

Facilities Maintenance Technical Assistance

- Assessing school facility needs for repair, maintenance, cleaning and general upkeep of buildings.
- Developing a facility maintenance schedule.
- Preparing estimation of costs of construction and repair activities.
- Preparing or reviewing facility budgets and controlling expenditures.

Facility Funding Technical Assistance

- Assisting in the preparation of eligibility determination, in consultation with the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC), and funding applications for state and federal school facility programs.
- Providing guidance on the complex work related to grant and funding application preparation, submission, evaluation, and financial monitoring and reporting.
- Identifying national, state, county, and municipal government funding sources, as well as opportunities from for-profit, and philanthropic sources which may offset eligible project components.

- Reviewing and interpreting grant and funding agency guidelines and regulations and advising district staff regarding the policies and application procedures of those agencies.

Contract Management Technical Assistance

- Performing site inspections and building evaluations.
- Assisting with preparing Request for Proposals (RFP) and/or Request for Quotes (RFQ).
- Serving as liaison among the district, the district's architect and those California governmental agencies involved in school and construction projects, including the Division of the State Architect, the CDE, the OPSC, the local fire department and the state fire marshal.
- Reviewing the pre-qualifications process of contractors.
- Collecting and organizing the information necessary for the informal and formal bidding process to include scopes of work, general conditions, notices to proceed, agreements, insurance, and bond requirements.
- Providing guidance on obtaining all necessary insurance for construction projects.
- Assisting with compiling all the needed information for the California Environmental Quality Act.

Instructional Resources Technical Assistance

- Training developed on school facility maintenance assessment, contract management, and funding resources and strategies.

- Collaborate with SME facility contractors to identify training needs and accompany SME facility contractors on selected site visits.
- Provide recommendations to the project's team on (1) training content and sequence, and (2) training design and delivery, including live and asynchronous options.
- Develop training evaluations.
- Provide input on the development of adaptable tools that may be included in the training.

Impact of services

As previously mentioned, facilities work is complex, but through targeted technical assistance to 165 “high-need” schools, their administrative and facilities staff will be better equipped to assess facilities needs using streamlined approaches and standardized tools developed through this project. School leaders will be better informed on available funding, including the SFP resulting in greater investments in their facilities. Currently, there are no related resources on the CDE website. This project develops standardized forms and tools for SSDs, enabling them to navigate challenges related to project funding, application processes, and leveraging all available resources to improve their facilities. This process starts with the assessment of conditions, and then utilizing the developed tools and resources the SSDs will be better able to provide their high-need students with safe, healthy, sustainable, and equitable learning environments.

Participants feedback from technical trainings will advise the ongoing program, as well as other state agencies to improve processes required for the submittal of applications

for state funding and facility upgrades. Additionally, the development of resources and tools will be continual, providing these SSDs with the most current information and requirements for the various programs and funding available to them.

Sustainable Training

The CDE plan for ensuring sustainability beyond the grant period is based on the following three strategies:

1. *Ongoing development of training.* Through the direct technical services described above, the CDE will identify the facilities knowledge and skills gaps among SSD leaders to inform the content of training. We anticipate a mixed delivery approach, with self-paced online materials, as well as in-person or remote live training, which can be convened on-demand at the regional level. Once designed, updating training content will be built into SFTSD operations, and continually revised, by CDE staff, based upon training evaluations. The ongoing updates to training materials will ensure improvements in practice among administrative and facilities staff of all SSDs.
2. *Ongoing support of professional learning communities.* The CDE will continue meeting with community professionals at the county/regional levels serving SSD facility leaders to share information and answer questions from the field. These field meetings will occur at a minimum of twice a year to provide open communication between CDE and the field.
3. *Ongoing full-time staff position.* This position will continue to serve as the liaison between CDE and the SSDs, as well as facility maintenance leaders for all

districts. The ongoing update of all tools and resources will be provided by this position, as well as gathering input on needs of the SSDs.

Project focus

The desired outcomes of the project are supported by research on small/rural school districts. [*Small Districts, Big Challenges*](#) found that these districts face key challenges that hamper the ability to provide their high-need students with equitable resources to be academically successful. Through this project more resources will be provided to address the following disparities faced by SSDs:

- *Deferred maintenance needs are significant.* Seventy percent of the school districts in the bottom quintile of capital outlay are SSDs. These districts are also less likely to have passed a local facilities bond in recent years. Fifty-one percent of small/rural school districts are not able to consistently budget enough each year for facility cleaning, upkeep, and maintenance. The common-facility related complaints are: (a) HVAC systems, which impact air quality and thermal comfort; (b) outdoor structures, including shade, fields, and sidewalks; and, (c) a variety of issues related to leaks and water facilities, space constraints, and aging buildings. In fact, 55 percent of responding districts report that at least half of their school facilities are 40-plus years old.
- *Lack of technical expertise and adequate staffing for facilities is a significant challenge.* After funding, these district leaders identify knowledge and expertise, staff limits and the complexity of school facilities work as their biggest challenges. Forty-eight percent do not have a dedicated facility director.

- *The application for the SFP is difficult.* These district leaders report that understanding eligibility requirements and then submitting applications for state funding is complicated and overly time-consuming. Superintendents lament that they are unaware of which funding sources are available to them.

Our grant proposal is a response to this research-based call to action. Our logic model proposes six overarching strategies to achieve the desired outcomes. Three of these strategies are focused on providing targeted technical assistance to selected SSDs as follows:

1. Identifying the knowledge and skill gaps of SSD leaders.
2. Developing training to support SSDs.
3. Developing standardized tools and resources to facilitate training.

The next three strategies will directly lead to the expansion of CDE's capability to serve SSDs. These strategies are as follows:

4. Increasing staff capacity by creating one full-time position to maintain SSD support as well as training existing field staff in facility maintenance assessment.
5. Collecting baseline data on school facilities will strengthen our ability to inform the state budget process on the level of facility funding needed.
6. Establishing facility practitioner communities, in cooperation with COEs and the SSDA, to sustain the training at the county/regional level beyond the grant period.

Adequacy of Resources

The itemized budget breakdown of personnel salaries, benefits, contractors, indirect and other projected expenditures are detailed in the budget and budget narrative. The

costs applied are based on state direct cost rates for personnel and other items used on other grants. The indirect costs used are standard when applied to federal projects. As explained in the introduction, SSDs face numerous facility-related challenges, including buildings that are old, lack modern technology, and contain potential health hazards which stem from inadequate maintenance of facilities. These challenges make it hard for SSDs, which often lack sufficient staff and knowledge, to obtain the necessary funding to ensure their facilities are safe, healthy, sustainable, and equitable learning environments for all students.

The requested funds will allow the CDE to increase its capacity to better support SSDs in their ability to address deferred maintenance and facility needs. The CDE identified 152 districts that serve 82,175 students in 371 schools across the state as meeting the “high-need” criteria outlined in the definition. Given the state’s vast size, the logistical challenges posed by complexity, time limitations, and geographical constraints, direct services are anticipated to be extended to approximately 165 schools within 105 districts across 23 counties over the course of the five-year grant period. The project will allow these SSDs to have the training and documents needed to support the ability to provide the necessary facilities for their students.

Management Plan

Two CDE divisions will have key roles in the project. The SFTSD, within the Operations and Administration Branch (OAB), will conduct a majority of the grant activity, and the Technology Services Division (TSD), within the Information and Technology Branch (ITB), will support the data aspects of the project.

Operations and Administration Branch

Abel Guillen, Deputy Superintendent of the OAB, is the Project Sponsor who reports directly to Mary Nicely, the Chief Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction. As the Project Sponsor, Mr. Guillen is responsible for oversight and ensuring the project meets the desired outcomes and is completed on time and within budget. He also ensures coordination and collaboration between the ITB to support data collection with SFTSD, Human Resources and the OAB.

Juan Mireles, Director, SFTSD, leads and supervises both the Facilities Planning Field Operations and Facilities Planning Policy and Standards units within the Division. Mr. Mireles reviews and approves grant reporting and ensures coordination between the field work, tool development, training design, and data collection.

John Gordon, Education Administrator I, leads the Facilities Planning Field Operations Unit and has significant experience working directly with districts. For the grant project, Mr. Gordon will supervise the grant project manager, consult with SME contractors in the school facility assessment and tool design, and assisting with the planning of school site data collection.

Christopher Maricle, Education Administrator I, leads the Facilities Planning Policy and Standards Unit. Mr. Maricle will consult with the learning design contractor to ensure alignment of content selection, organization, sequence, and the learning activities that will result in the desired outcomes for school leaders and will support the grant manager in the design and implementation of project evaluations.

Grant Project Manager (SSM I Specialist) duties as follows:

- Personnel: Leads recruitment process for SME field and learning design contractors.
- Communication: Serve as the primary liaison to project partners, including SSD leaders, COEs, the SSDA, and the CCS. Also, will coordinate internal communication for the grant project.
- Logistics: Coordinates all travel, and all remote and in-person meetings.
- Oversight: Guides the overall implementation of the grant project and monitors contractor deliverables, grant budget, grant reporting, and audit requirements and processes.
- Evaluation Develops evaluation tools to measure effectiveness of contractors providing direct technical assistance to districts.

Note: Upon the conclusion of the grant, this position will be a permanent addition to the SFTSD staff. The SSM I Specialist will:

- Serve as the first point of contact for SSDs on deferred facility maintenance.
- Sustain count/regional-level learning conversations.
- Update tools based on feedback from the field.
- Ensure tools are available on the CDE website and shared with school districts.
- Update training based on input.

Information and Technology Branch

Alan Nakahara, Information Technology Manager II, leads the Application Development and Maintenance Office within the TSD. Mr. Nakahara will lead the design of a custom data system to support the collection of school building information, including: (1) identifying data elements to be collected [e.g., data definitions, unique identifiers, input

validations]; (2) creating user permissions and interfaces for district and school site facility leaders; and (3) building standardized data file templates for districts and school information uploads, along with other general system requirements.

Subject Matter Expert Contractors

The project will be supported by an estimated four FTE SME contractors in the project's second through fifth years. The contractors will provide subject matter expertise, as specified, and will consult with both Mr. Gordon and Mr. Maricle.

Monitoring Project Activity and Timelines

CDE will identify and address project barriers on an ongoing basis by regularly reviewing feedback from SSDs, COEs, the SSDA, SME contractors, and other project stakeholders, to gain awareness of the strengths, weaknesses, and blind spots of the technical assistance, guidance, and tools, that has been used by the SSDs. Through this iterative process, all necessary changes and corrections will be completed, as appropriate, to address areas where improvement is needed for SSDs to be successful in their ability to leverage all available resources to ensure their school facilities are safe, healthy, sustainable, and equitable learning environments for all students.

Evaluation

The CDE will develop an evaluation process for assessing the extent to which project goals, objectives, tasks, and milestones are being met by collecting and analyzing demographic, program, and perception data. The data will be collected on an ongoing basis, reviewed by the project team, and shared with stakeholders through learning conversations at the county/regional level.

Demographic Data

- A list of the total school sites visited in each county.
- The number of buildings assessed.

Program/Operational Data

- SFTSD FTE position funded and filled.
- SFTSD website populated with developed tools and training.

Perception Data: Pre- and post-assessment will include, but is not limited to:

- Understanding the effective practices in school facility assessment and available funding resources and support.
- Satisfaction with CDE designed facility assessment tools and CDE provided training on facility deferred maintenance and facility funding training.

The table below aligns with these various measures to project strategies and outcomes.

Strategies	Outcomes	Evaluation/Evidence
1. Increase staff capacity	CDE has one FTE to support SSDs and is funded and filled.	Measured by: January 2025 position is filled. January 2029 position is funded in CDE budget.
2. Identify knowledge and skill gaps	Training evaluations, providing ongoing assessment of knowledge and skill gaps. 165 SSDs receive direct services.	Measured by: The extent to which training evaluations measures indicate an increase in knowledge and skill by participants. Measured by: A list of the total school sites visited in each county.
3. Develop standardized	CDE has a fully developed website of facility maintenance	Measured by: The extent to which the SFTSD website is dedicated to facility maintenance and funding that

tools and training.	and funding guidance and tools.	includes; (1) a collection of downloadable tools; (2) access to training opportunities; and (3) information on funding strategies and resources.
4. Collect baseline data on school facilities.	Baseline data for 165 is collected.	Measured by: The extent to which CDE has: (1) a data management collection tool and (2) a functioning data system populated with baseline data from SSDs.
5. Develop training to support SSDs.	CDE provides synchronous and on-demand training for SSDs.	Measured by: (1) The number of trainings available for SSD leaders; (2) the number of SSD leaders that have completed one or more trainings; and (3) the extent to which SSD leaders rate the training as effective and useful in training evaluations.
6. Establish Facility Practitioner Communities	Learning conversations are an embedded activity at the county/regional level.	Measured by: (1) The total number of conversations convened by region; (2) the total number of participants; and (3) the extent to which SSD leaders rate the practitioner community conversation as effective and useful in training evaluations.