

California Department of Education



Report to the Seismic Safety Commission



Alfred E. Alquist
**SEISMIC SAFETY
COMMISSION**

2023

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**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION**

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To: California Seismic Safety Commission

Dear Members of the Seismic Safety Commission,

On behalf of the California Department of Education (CDE), I am pleased to present our Annual Report as stipulated under Assembly Bill 100 (AB 100). This report highlights our ongoing commitments and efforts in advancing California's overarching goals in earthquake risk reduction and post-disaster economic recovery.

Over the past 2 years, the CDE has worked tirelessly to bolster the resilience of our schools and communities in the face of all hazards including seismic risks. Recognizing our responsibility as a cornerstone of the community, we have focused on making our administrators, teachers, and students well-prepared for potential seismic events. Our initiatives have included, promotion of the Great Shakeout, implementing a disaster management framework to support the Standardized Emergency Management System, and beginning the development of a state agency specific Emergency Operations Plan.

Furthermore, we understand the pivotal role education plays in the post-disaster economic recovery phase. By ensuring continuity in our operations even after a disaster, we provide a semblance of normalcy for our students, maintaining a stable environment conducive to learning and growth. We also contribute to community recovery by providing a resource to local education agencies for recovery information and support.

Our commitment to these critical roles would not be possible without the partnerships we have nurtured with other state agencies. We are especially grateful for our collaboration with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES). The expertise, resources, and support that the Cal OES has provided us have been instrumental in enhancing our capacities and readiness. We remain committed to this partnership and are confident in our collective capabilities to face and overcome any seismic challenges that may arise.

Sincerely,

Juan Mireles

Director

School Facilities and Transportation Services Division

California Department of Education

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Purpose and Objectives

Purpose

The purpose of this Annual Report under Assembly Bill 100 (AB 100) is to provide a comprehensive account of the actions taken by the California Department of Education (CDE) towards mitigating earthquake risks and facilitating post-disaster economic recovery in California. This includes our strategies, initiatives, and partnerships formed to achieve these critical objectives.

Scope

This report covers the period from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023. Within this timeline, the report examines the strategic measures the CDE has undertaken to enhance the seismic resilience of our school facilities and the preparedness of our students, teachers, and administrators. This includes efforts to strengthen school infrastructures, enhance emergency response plans, and improve disaster education among our students.

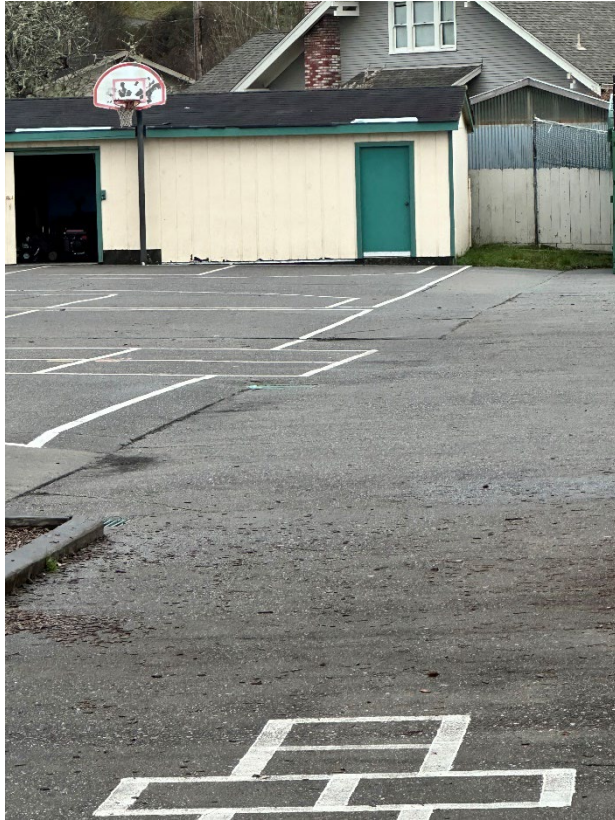
Furthermore, the report delves into CDE's role in post-disaster economic recovery, elucidating our strategy to ensure the continuity of educational services and the function of schools as community resource centers following seismic events. Finally, the report highlights our crucial partnerships with various state agencies, particularly our collaboration with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES).

Background

Seismic events in California, both recent and past, have underscored the critical importance of disaster preparedness and the role of the CDE in maintaining educational continuity and contributing to community recovery in the aftermath. As a keystone of our communities, the CDE serves millions of students across thousands of schools, making our initiatives vital to the state's comprehensive approach towards earthquake risk reduction and post-disaster economic recovery.

Two seismic events particularly underscore the urgent need for our initiatives. The 2019 Trona earthquake and the 2022 Ferndale earthquake, both significant seismic events, resulted in substantial impacts to the communities, including our schools.

In 2019, the Trona quake, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake, resulted in significant damage to schools in the affected area, disrupting education and impacting the local community's recovery process. The event illuminated the urgency of prioritizing seismic resilience and disaster preparedness within our school communities.



The Rio Dell School suffered significant damages as a result of the Ferndale Quake including the cracked and uneven pavement in this photo.

Further highlighting this issue was the Ferndale earthquake in 2022. This 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck Humboldt County, causing considerable damage to school facilities and posing a challenge to the continuity of education for students in the region. The event served as a stark reminder of the need to fortify our preparedness and response plans, and to foster resilience within our school communities.

In the wake of these seismic activities and the potential risks they pose to our communities, the California state government has undertaken comprehensive measures to enhance the state's resilience to earthquakes. Under AB 100, various state departments, including the CDE, are to submit an annual report detailing their contributions towards these risk reduction and post-disaster economic recovery goals.

Our department not only aims to ensure

the safety of our students, staff, and facilities but also to maintain educational continuity following a disaster to support community recovery. This report provides a detailed account of our initiatives, outcomes, and future plans in alignment with these goals. Through transparency and collaboration, we seek to strengthen our preparedness, foster resilience in our communities, and continue our collective march towards a safer, seismically resilient California.

Seismic Programming

This section provides overviews of the comprehensive efforts and strategic initiatives undertaken by the California Department of Education (CDE) in order to mitigate seismic risks in school environments throughout the state.

School Emergency Reporting System (SERS)

This reporting tool allows local educational agencies (LEAs) to promptly report disaster impacts on their schools and request necessary aid, ensuring swift deployment of resources during the critical emergency response phase. By facilitating communication and speeding up aid, SERS is an essential element in our disaster preparedness and response strategy.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ep/>



Disaster Service Worker Video

In collaboration with the Cal OES and the Earthquake Country Alliance, the CDE assisted in the development of an informational video to educate school administrators and staff about their vital roles during disasters. Recognizing school personnel as Disaster Service Workers under California law, this initiative helps to foster a prepared and responsive educational community in times of crises. https://youtu.be/2nP_unOCDGQ

Emergency Operations Plan

In partnership with West ED, the CDE is developing its agency-wide Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). This plan outlines our strategies for managing emergency situations, including our processes for mutual aid and the unique emergency response capacities of our various divisions, programs, and functions.

Preparedness Ambassadors Program

Aimed at 4th grade students, this curriculum fosters a culture of disaster preparedness from an early age, encouraging students to engage with and promote disaster preparedness measures within their homes, schools, and local communities. This program was developed in coordination with the Cal OES and various other entities.



<https://www.caloes.ca.gov/office-of-the-director/operations/planning-preparedness-prevention/planning-preparedness/school-emergency-planning-safety/reparedness-ambassadors/>

Emergency Services Team Educational Resource List

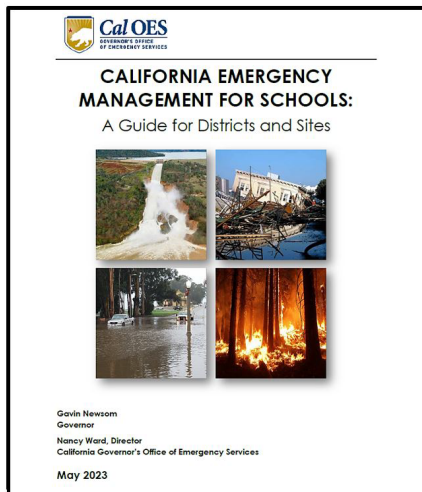
This comprehensive list of external resources supports the needs of our LEAs before, during, and after disasters. Available on the School Disaster and Emergency Management Floods webpage, it acts as a vital repository of contact information and resources. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ep/documents/esteresourcelist.pdf>

California Education Code Sections 32280–32289.5: Comprehensive School Safety Plans

In accordance with California Education Code sections 32280–32289.5, the Comprehensive School Safety Plan necessitates certain measures for earthquake preparedness. A school building disaster plan is required, which encompasses a variety of potential emergencies including earthquakes. Specific actions to be taken before, during, and after an earthquake must be detailed, and a regular drop procedure practice must be established: quarterly for elementary schools and biannually for secondary schools. Furthermore, plans should permit public agencies, like the American Red Cross, to utilize school facilities as shelters during emergencies. The school safety plan must be regularly updated, at least annually, and non-sensitive safety-related materials should be made available for public inspection. Each school is obligated to review, update, and adopt its plan by March 1 each year. You can access this resource at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/vp/cssp.asp>.

Statewide Wildfire Preparedness Webinar for Educational Entities

To prepare for the wildfire season, the CDE partnered with other state agencies to provide crucial preparedness information to school districts, charter schools, private schools, and educational organizations representing K-12 schools within the state. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVe8V-1D21s>



California Emergency Management for Schools: A Guide for Districts and Sites

This collaborative guide from the Cal OES and the CDE emphasizes disaster preparedness in our school districts and sites. Based on lessons learned from previous disasters, this guide promotes a culture of disaster resiliency and assists in planning efforts to protect the health and safety of our students.

[https://www.caloes.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/Preparedness/Documents/California-Emergency-Management A-Guide-for-Districts-and-Sites_Final-05-11-23-2.pdf](https://www.caloes.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/Preparedness/Documents/California-Emergency-Management-A-Guide-for-Districts-and-Sites_Final-05-11-23-2.pdf)

Project School Emergency Response to Violence (SERV)

Project SERV provides funding to LEAs whose learning environments have been disrupted due to violent or traumatic incidents. By providing resources to re-establish a safe learning environment, this program is integral to our post-disaster recovery strategy. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/sf/projectserve2018.asp>

Federal Disaster Assistance

In major disaster scenarios, the CDE leverages resources from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency to help rebuild community infrastructure, including public schools. Working closely with the Cal OES, we implement the Public Assistance Grant Program to facilitate this recovery process. <https://www.caloes.ca.gov/office-of-the-director/operations/recovery-directorate/recovery-operations/public-assistance/federal-disaster-assistance/>

California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA)

The CDAA provides financial assistance from the state for costs incurred by local governments as a result of disaster events. It enables local governments to undertake necessary recovery measures and contributes towards cost-sharing under federal public assistance programs. <https://www.caloes.ca.gov/office-of-the-director/operations/recovery-directorate/recovery-operations/public-assistance/california-disaster-assistance-act/>

Facility Hardship Funding for School Construction

This funding service addresses critical needs for pupil housing when current facilities pose an imminent threat to pupil health and safety. It is a critical component of our approach to ensuring the physical safety of our school environments. <https://www.dgs.ca.gov/OPSC/Services/Page-Content/Office-of-Public-School-Construction-Services-List-Folder/Obtain-Facility-Hardship-Funding>

Financial Hardship Assistance for School Construction

This service provides opportunities for school districts unable to provide all or a portion of their local share, ensuring equitable access to safe and secure educational facilities across the state. <https://www.dgs.ca.gov/OPSC/Services/Page-Content/Office-of-Public-School-Construction-Services-List-Folder/Access-Financial-Hardship-Assistance-for-School-Construction>

Seismic Mitigation Funding

The Seismic Mitigation Program, part of the Facility Hardship Program, is crucial in our efforts to mitigate earthquake risks. It provides resources for the repair, reconstruction, or replacement of the "most vulnerable" school facilities, contributing significantly to our commitment to creating safe and seismically resilient educational environments. <https://www.dgs.ca.gov/OPSC/Services/Page-Content/Office-of-Public-School-Construction-Services-List-Folder/Access-Seismic-Mitigation-Funding>