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Fact Sheets

Title

Funding School Heat Management

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Reliance on local funding for school facilities limits heat action and privileges wealthier districts with greater administrative capacity.

Limited funding leads districts to push back necessary maintenance and improvements. State facilities funding has local match requirements and a first-come, first-served approach that leads to [inequitable outcomes](#). With the need to raise funds through property taxes and local bond measures, districts most in need of cooling upgrades may have the least capacity to apply for and administer the funding.

Existing state programs *can* fund school heat management, but they are not specifically intended to address heat and therefore may be used for other priorities.



[38% of districts](#) lack sufficient local property wealth to generate funds to address basic facility needs.



Between 1998 and 2021, white students [received](#) an average of \$700+ more in School Facilities Program funds than Black and Latinx students.



The California State Auditor [estimated](#) that the state would need to spend \$7.4 billion to meet all school facility needs from 2022 through 2027.



WHAT CAN THE STATE DO?

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Collaborate with researchers to analyze needs and opportunities to establish long-term funding dedicated to heat mitigation for schools.

- » Prioritize the most heat-vulnerable schools based on local climate, lack of cooling equipment and shade, and socioeconomic disadvantages. The [Healthy Places Index: Extreme Heat Edition](#) tool can help prioritize schools.
- » Facilitate funding access for heat-vulnerable schools. Improve and target technical support and consider expanding formula funding to avoid application processes that disadvantage low-resourced school districts.
- » Prioritize energy efficiency by requiring and funding the installation of heat pumps whenever possible. Link funding for cooling systems and energy efficiency upgrades; encourage schools to holistically upgrade and weatherize buildings.
- » Remove barriers that prevent schools from maintaining and repairing installed equipment and infrastructure.

Policy Action Examples

Two pending 2023 bond measures would increase funding for school facilities: [SB 28](#) (\$15.5 billion, Pre-K through college) and [AB 247](#) (\$14 billion, Pre-K through community college).

Federal funds could become available through the Living School Act ([S.4993](#)) or if the Stafford Act is amended ([H.R. 3965](#)) to include heat among disasters eligible FEMA funding.