

K-12 Construction/Facilities Vendors:

Major Opportunities Exist for Architectural/Engineering/Construction Firms That Target Correctly

“I was head of the entire building project in my role as superintendent. I worked with the bond advisor to pass the bond issue and then the architects from day one... We had a job foreman who worked for the construction company with whom I worked almost exclusively.”

—Dr. Larry Lysell, Superintendent
Republic County (Ks.) Unified School District

District Administrators are the Key to the \$20 Billion Facilities Market

The \$20.3 billion K-12 construction market is growing. And so is the power of the superintendent and school business official. New research shows that district administrators control the spending for facilities development and business procurement.

For vendors, contacting superintendents and developing relationships is the key to repeat business. If the relationship is a good one, it will continue throughout his career, even after he moves to a new district every 4.6 years.

“In every case except one, I’d use the same vendors again,” says Dr. Larry Lysell, Superintendent, Republic County (Ks.) Unified Schools. Dr. Lysell has supervised a \$2.4 million “add-on” and a new \$5.5 million K-8 facility.

“They remember you — absolutely,” says Pamela J. Loeffelman, Perkins Eastman Architects. “The construction industry is not that big of one and it’s amazing how, if you pay attention, your circle of friends and references and sources for job leads continues to grow on a daily basis.”

Despite depleted state coffers and post 9-11 economic uncertainty, experts predict more than \$20 billion worth of continued funding annually for facility renovation and new school building construction.

To gain or maintain a secure place in the K-12 construction market, architectural and engineering (A/E) services should target district administrators, understand their purchasing power, and stay abreast of industry trends.

This white paper concludes with several case studies that illustrate how a superintendent-led facilities team can succeed at school construction.



Education Week readers control the purse strings for their schools and/or districts in key areas like:

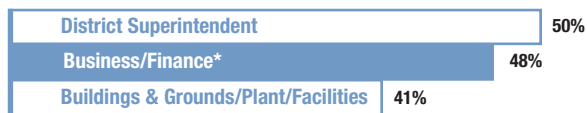
- Buildings & grounds maintenance equipment/services
- Security
- Energy conservation
- Facilities for the handicapped
- Athletic/playground equipment
- Technology products/services

Befriend the District Administrators

Schools and districts spent \$20.3 billion in 2001 to build new schools and/or renovate existing ones. **While states and bonds helped foot the bill, superintendents signed the checks.**

According to *American School & University's* newest purchasing study, more district superintendents (50%) than any other title approve expenditures for facilities procurement. In larger districts, the school business official or facilities manager also can approve business purchasing.

Superintendent Approves Business/Facilities Procurement



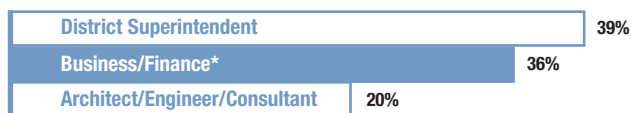
** sometimes called assistant superintendents and/or school business officials
Source: American School & University 2000 Purchasing Study*

“Many superintendents like to stay close to the facilities planning and management process because it’s one-half their budget. It’s risky — there are more opportunities for things to go wrong,” says Ed Peters, capital projects director, Edmonds School District, one of the 10 largest in Washington State.

District Administrators Also Specify Brands for Purchase

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of school boards require district staff to specify products. Usually, the superintendent, facilities manager, or school business official evaluates the differences among brands. The architect/consultant/engineer selects products only one in five times because many school districts have established preferences for brands.

Superintendents Also Evaluate/Select Brands



** sometimes called assistant superintendents and/or school business officials
Source: American School & University 2000 Purchasing Study*

You won't reach Education Week subscribers anywhere else. Most do not subscribe to/regularly read School Planning & Management or District Administration.

Establishing Relationships Is Mission Critical

Kit Dunn, vice president, Ellini & Dunn, a full-service communications and marketing firm focused on K-12 education, urges lead project professionals, like architects, construction managers, and bond counselors, to contact administrators directly.

Establishing a good relationship with district administrators is critical, says Ms. Dunn. Urban superintendents' tenure is less than five years, so they "build long-lasting relationships with particular firms. These relationships are maintained as they move on to new districts."

"Trust," says Ms. Dunn "is critical."

Though districts in most states are required to use a "lowest qualified bidder" for contracts and services, this does not apply to the selection of "lead" consultants. Most districts go through a comprehensive Request-for-Proposal (RFP) process to initiate these services, but have the opportunity to invite specific firms to submit proposals for review.

"Our architect [was] one of three candidates we invited to submit bids," writes Dr. William C. McGahan, Superintendent, North Platte (Ne.) Catholic Schools and author of *From the Ground Up: Practical Information on a School Construction Project*. "The successful bidder came in \$50,000 lower...and we had the architect we wanted to begin with. Good experience with school facilities...good reputation with boards/administrators."

Importance of Reaching District Staff

Eighty-one percent of administrators responding to a recent *School Construction News/Education Week* marketing survey reported that it is "**Very Important**" or "**Somewhat Important**" for school architects to reach the district superintendent's office when seeking a contract.

Importance of Reaching District Office



Source: *School Construction News/Education Week Marketing*

Greg Candler, Marketing Manager, Best Access Systems, a total security solutions firm, agrees. "As it has become more expensive, as electronics have come into play and the need for more sophisticated access control comes into play, the decision making moves up the ladder very rapidly and you can be working with anybody from a superintendent to a business official."

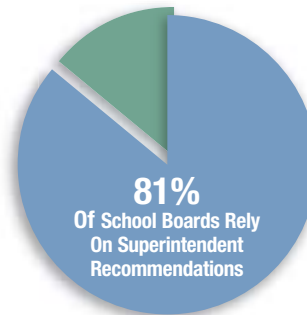
Education Week's all-paid circulation means your ad will not be missed.

- *More than three-quarters rely on advertising for vendor information.*
- *They spend, on average, 1 hour/5 minutes reading each issue.*
- *They pay, on average, \$69 for 43 weekly and meaningful issues.*

Architects: Know Your Interview Team's Hot Buttons

When a project becomes public, architectural firms submit proposals. The district evaluates the proposals and releases a short list of three to four firms. These short list organizations then interview for the job.

The school board will select the architect, based usually on the recommendations of the interview committee. New research shows that school boards accept superintendent recommendations eight out of 10 times.



Source: School Construction News/Education Week Marketing

According to James Dyck, secretary and treasurer, The Architectural Partnership, it is critical to know what the “hot buttons” are for the particular group you’ll be interviewing with.

“The larger the district the less involved the school board might be and the more involved staff might be. In a small district it would be the superintendent, principal, and the school board or the building committee and the school board. And there may be school board representation from a larger district as well, but it would include a number of staff people. **Typically, the site-based administrator (the principal) is a key player in the selection and interview process.**”


So Don't Forget About The Principal

Increased principal involvement, says Mr. Dyck, is a direct result of the growing number of site-based managed districts. Eighty-nine percent of all school districts are now site-based. And even if the school is a new one, there is usually site-based representation in the form of principals from other schools.

“We did a number of years ago four new elementary schools for Lincoln (Ne.) public schools...and we had three principals on our design committee and other central administration people, as well as parents, citizens in general, and some teachers. So we had a very diverse design team and it was very good.”

Julie Barrett, National Business Development Director, Pinnacle One, a leading program and project management firm, agrees. “[It’s] good to involve the different site administrators because they have buy-in, they know what their needs are.”

“The principals of today may be the superintendents of tomorrow,” adds Kerry Leonard, OWP&P, a master planning and design services firm.



More than three-quarters of Education Week subscribers report that their school districts are planning construction and/or remodeling efforts.

Districts Can Invite A/E Services to Bid

The process of selecting an architectural and engineering (A/E) firm can vary among districts.

In Washington State, for example, the selection of architectural and engineer (A/E) services is governed by law. It is illegal for a district to hire an A/E firm without going through a formal advertising/selection process, says Mr. Peters, who has managed educational facilities projects for the last 15 years. But, as Kit Dunn indicates, district staff can invite specific firms to submit qualifications. Therefore, maintaining positive relationships with district staff is key.

A Procurement Model — Edmonds (Wa.) School District

Purchasing goods/services for less than \$15,000

The district gathers informal quotes for what it will cost the school/district to purchase a product. *If the product or service is expected to cost less than a legally specified limit, the district can select the vendor of their choice.* This process is normally used when purchasing goods/services for less than \$15,000. The limits are specified by law, vary with the size of district, and change as new legislatures meet.

Purchasing goods/services for less than \$50,000

District specifies what is needed, then asks vendors for bids. Vendors must bid on exactly what has been specified. This procedure is normally used when purchasing products for \$50,000 or less. But again, the dollar limits are determined by law.

Purchasing goods/services worth \$50,000+

District must publicize their project in a paper of general circulation. Any vendor can submit a bid.

In Washington State, there is also a “small works roster” procedure for hiring contractors on small projects. Edmonds belongs to a co-op run by the city of Lynnwood that maintains a roster from which the member public agencies can select contractors.

Districts may purchase through the King County Directors Association, a “Costco for schools.” Smaller districts tend to purchase their products through KCDA. They pay a small management fee when purchasing, but gain time, convenience, and value. Large districts may buy through KCDA, as well. KCDA offers competitive pricing, even with the management fee, because of the volume of their purchases. Because KCDA does the bidding process in advance, districts can buy directly without any further process. The State of Washington also provides similar services for some products and services.

Education Week subscribers are avid networkers. More than 92% attend professional workshops and/or seminars to share information with colleagues.

Since Architectural Firms Are Hampered by Lack of Advertising, Marketing Is More Difficult

Architectural firms publish articles, develop Web sites, join local organizations, enter competitions, and speak at industry trade shows for national recognition.

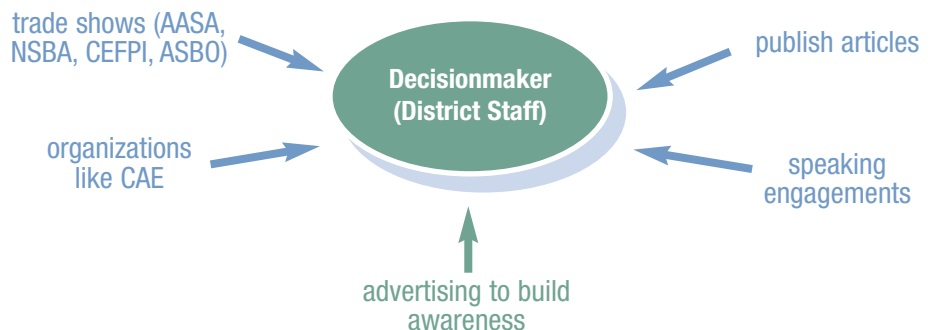
Popular trade shows include those sponsored by organizations like the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the National School Boards Association (NSBA), the Council of Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI), and the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO). Many architects also belong to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and/or the Committee on Architecture for Education (CAE), a subgroup of architects and allied professionals concerned with the quality and design of schools.

Building and maintaining relationships, say architects, is the key to repeat business. But without advertising, relationship management is time-consuming and expensive. Especially since 76% of business executives rely on business-to-business advertising for vendor information.

“That’s certainly a goal, to maintain positive relationships and work with [superintendents] from district to district,” says Mr. Dyck, vice chair, Committee on Architecture for Education.

Mr. Leonard of OWP&P agrees. “There are people I’ve known for 15 years... there are people I’ve worked with in multiple districts. So it is relationship-based.”

MARKETING CHANNELS – ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS



Management Firms Crave Visibility

Project management firms market differently, depending on service and region. For Ms. Barrett of Pinnacle One, exposure is key.

Advertising; conducting market research; meeting and greeting decisionmakers; volunteering, speaking and/or exhibiting at trade shows; and publishing articles are all part of the Pinnacle One mix. “And that’s not anything different than what a lot of these other firms do,” says Ms. Barrett.

“My whole issue is about visibility. I’m an advertiser at heart... You constantly need to have your name in front of [decisionmakers] and associated with what you do.”

Copies of Education Week distributed at trade shows sponsored by organizations like NSBA, CEFPI, AASA, ASBO, and NSSEA are must-buy issues because they reach our 217,000 regular readers plus thousands of convention attendees who are there to make final purchasing decisions.

Trade show hot spots include ones sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the National School Boards Association (NSBA), the Council of Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI), the Coalition of Adequate School Housing (CASH), and the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO).

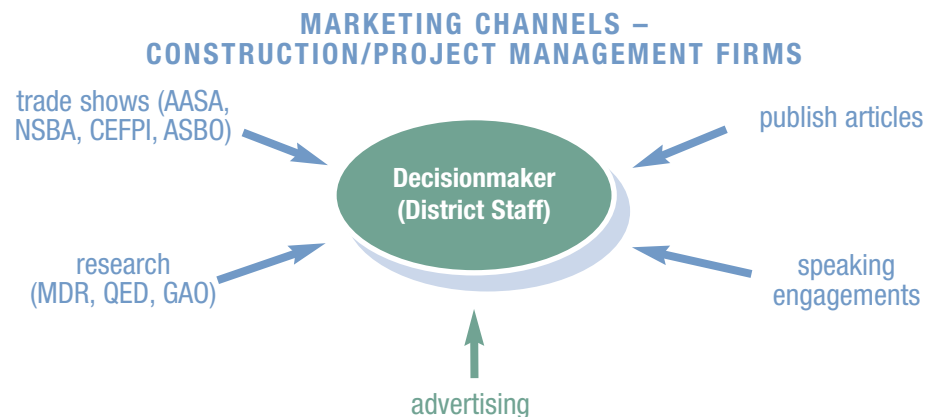
“NSBA and AASA...are definitely marking the trustees and the board administrators,” says Ms. Barrett. “With CASH and CEFPI and ASBO...you get the business officials, you get the superintendents, you get the facilities planners.”

Pinnacle One doesn’t target school board members.

“Our philosophy...is that you market to people you do work with. The boards are highly volatile,” says Ms. Barrett, “and you’ll get staff that don’t want to work with you.

“We find that the superintendent...is the key person because they are responsible for everything.”

To keep pace with education trends, Ms. Barrett relies on the General Accounting Office and market research firms like MDR and QED.





Education Week's experienced reporters provide unparalleled insights on a wide range of issues, from curriculum and facilities to technology and teaching. It is a one-stop source of education news.

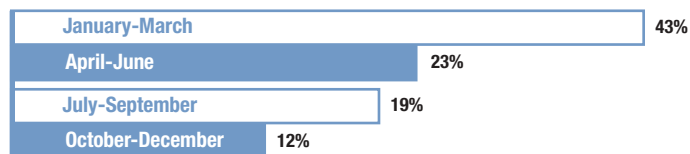
Timing Is Critical Because Purchasing Is Seasonal

Facilities purchasing is seasonal. Studies show that while the evaluation process usually begins in January, actual purchasing can occur all summer long.

Don't forget, though, that deliberations for A/E services continue throughout the year. So it is important to keep administrators informed of new and meaningful developments year-round.

The time between inception and completion of a building project varies, depending on the size and scope of the project. "We're doing a new high school that's probably a two year process," says Mr. Dyck. "It's a \$27 million project." For a typical addition/renovation project, it takes six to eight months for design, then 10-14 months from breaking ground to cutting the ribbon.

When Product Evaluation Begins



When Orders Are Placed



Source: American School & University 2000 Purchasing Study

Watch for Industry Trends

Campaign assistance, for example, is becoming critical to achieving political consensus on the release of public funds. More than ever, public schools are funded by bonds. Bonds increase taxes. Superintendents can help the bond succeed at the polls by enlisting the help of public relations firms.

With depleted state coffers and a post-9-11 economic uncertainty, selling the idea to the community and involving them early on is critical. The average price tag for a new elementary school is \$8.5 million. New high school construction can cost more than twice as much (\$20 million).

"Education is such a sacred cow, usually in an economic downturn it doesn't get hit as hard," says Steve Smith, education policy analyst, National Council of State Legislatures. "But given the magnitude of the budget crisis today, it's on the table."

Education Week's EPpy award-winning Web site, www.edweek.org, is another vital resource, with more than 65,000 unique visitors each week and more than 1.7 million pages viewed each month.

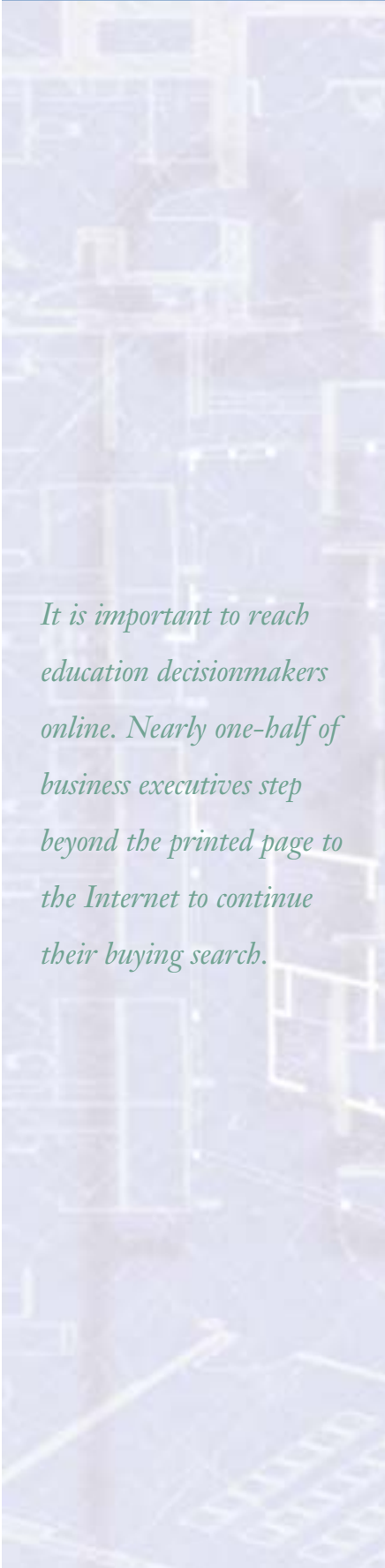
Positive Trends Abound

Nonetheless, experts are predicting more than \$20 billion in continued spending on K-12 construction in 2002. This will mark the third consecutive year for which spending has surpassed \$20 billion. **More than one-half that money (55%) is earmarked for new schools.**

The following facilities will be included in more than one-half of the NEW elementary, middle, and/or high schools begun in 2002.

	Elementary	Middle/JHS	High School
Core Facilities			
Classrooms	100%	100%	100%
Arts/Crafts	92%	81%	73%
Computer Lab	59%	95%	86%
Gymnasium	82%	95%	89%
Library	83%	89%	88%
Media Center	37%	86%	91%
Music	78%	95%	86%
Stage	< 50%	< 50%	68%
Science Lab	< 50%	89%	91%
Special Ed/Resource	58%	59%	55%
Auditorium/Theater	< 50%	< 50%	63%
Home Arts	< 50%	< 50%	54%
Support Facilities			
Offices	100%	100%	100%
Infirmary/Clinic	95%	98%	98%
Cafeteria	89%	98%	95%
Kitchen	87%	98%	93%
Lockers	20%	89%	95%
Technology Support			
Fiber Optics/Cable	95%	98%	96%
LANs	87%	97%	98%
WANs	51%	59%	70%
Athletic Facilities			
Bleachers	< 50%	84%	89%
Locker Rooms	< 50%	83%	93%
Athletic Fields/ Playground Equipment	< 50%	72%	86%
Other			
Security Equipment	100%	100%	100%

Source: School Planning & Management 2002 Construction Report



It is important to reach education decisionmakers online. Nearly one-half of business executives step beyond the printed page to the Internet to continue their buying search.

The following facilities will be included in more than one-half of the elementary, middle, and/or high school ADDITIONS begun in 2002.

	Elementary	Middle/JHS	High School
Core Facilities			
Classrooms	69%	76%	60%
Technology Support			
Fiber Optics/Cable	< 50%	< 50%	57%
Building Upgrade			
ADA Compliance	85%	96%	95%
Alarm Systems	85%	96%	95%
Controls	66%	75%	82%
Electric Overhaul	99%	97%	97%
HVAC	99%	97%	93%
Lighting	98%	97%	98%
Plumbing	< 50%	< 50%	64%
Security	78%	79%	90%
Windows	85%	94%	96%

Source: School Planning & Management 2002 Construction Report

Your Solution: Advertise in *Education Week*

Leading marketers know the value of advertising in the award-winning *Education Week*, American education’s newspaper of record. More than 217,000 superintendents/assistant superintendents, school business officials, principals and other decisionmakers read each issue of *Education Week*. Most (82%) control the purse strings for their schools and/or district in key areas like:

- Buildings & grounds maintenance equipment/services
- Security devices
- Energy conservation
- Facilities for the handicapped
- Athletic/playground equipment
- Technology products & services

You won’t reach *Education Week* subscribers anywhere else. Most DO NOT subscribe to and regularly read *School Planning & Management* or *District Administration*.

Education Week’s all-paid circulation means that subscribers have a vested interest in reading each issue. *Education Week* subscribers pay, on average, \$69/year for 43 weekly and meaningful issues. Most K-12 “facilities-specific” publications are “controlled,” meaning educators don’t subscribe to or necessarily read them.

Education Week readers are avid networkers. More than 92% attend professional workshops and seminars to share information with colleagues. Copies of *Education Week* distributed at trade shows sponsored by organizations like NSBA, CEFPI, AASA, ASBO, and NSSEA are must-buy issues because they reach our 217,000 regular readers plus thousands of convention attendees who are there to make final purchasing decisions.

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Our online visitors directly influence the purchase of products and services like:

- Construction/Retrofit Construction
- Portable Classrooms
- Security/Fire Protection
- Communications Systems
- Heating/Air Conditioning/Ventilation
- Furniture
- Floor Coverings
- Facilities Management & Maintenance
- Athletic/Playground Equipment

Published weekly 41 times a year, with two annual reports, *Technology Counts* and *Quality Counts*, *Education Week* and *Education Week on the Web* should not be missed.

*Visitors to
www.edweek.org
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- *Construction/Retrofit*
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fire protection*
- *Communications
systems*
- *Heating/air
conditioning/
ventilation*

“I and my department — this district — is committed to having strong ties between educational facilities and educational outcomes. It is my job to know my client. My client is the educational program. I must understand their world. Education Week is very helpful for keeping up with that.”

— Ed Peters, capital projects director
Edmonds (CA) School District

Case Studies

The following case studies illustrate how a superintendent-led facilities team can succeed at school construction.

Vista Unified School District Vista, CA

Many of California’s schools are seeing tremendous growth, and residents of the liberal-leaning state have passed two record-breaking state school construction bond measures in recent years in order to provide better facilities for their students. The \$6.7 billion and \$13.05 billion bonds, passed in 1998 and 2002, respectively, will match any school-construction funding that the districts raise locally.

The Vista Unified School District, near San Diego, was one of those districts that saw dramatic growth in the 1980s and 1990s because of its mild climate and location. The district, which now has more than 28,000 students, was unable to build enough schools to accommodate that growth and ended up with several overcrowded schools.

But its residents saw the incentive of a matching grant from the state. Last year, on its second attempt, the voters passed a \$40 million bond that will allow them to build 10 new schools in the next 10 years. Two new elementary schools are scheduled to open in September 2003.

A panel made up of Superintendent Dave Cowles, the district’s assistant superintendent who handles business matters, several of the district’s business officials, and the district’s director of facilities submitted a request for proposals to design and build the projects. The panel received about 10 proposals and interviewed the candidates, and they eventually chose three architecture firms specializing in different aspects of school construction to design the facilities. Cowles said those choices were based on proposed cost, the firm’s experience, the length of the project, and customer satisfaction records.

Cowles worked closely with the chosen architectural firms to gain approval from the school board for their plans. At the same time, his assistant superintendent who handles business matters worked with the state’s facilities office to gain their approval for the district’s plans.

Cowles also facilitated discussions with officials from the existing schools and community members to determine which schools should be top priorities and should be built first.

Once the plans were drawn and financing was secured, Superintendent Cowles and his panel began the process of accepting bids and hiring contractors.

Currently, Vista Unified has three schools under construction. While the assistant superintendent oversees most of the day-to-day aspects of managing construction, Cowles said he visits the construction sites at least once a week to observe and walk through the buildings with the contractors. He has also been called on to resolve problems that might arise between the architects and contractors. One recent issue

“Education Week is one of the finest publications in education. If you are anybody in education you need to read this because it keeps you abreast of what’s going on.”

– Bobby Bailey, Principal
Eau Claire High School
Columbia, SC

he resolved was choosing the color of awnings that will grace the entrance to one of the schools — a decision that might sound mundane but was actually causing considerable conflict, he noted.

Superintendent Cowles and other district officials are also now purchasing land and planning the sites where the rest of the new schools will be built

Medina School District Medina, OH

The Medina, Ohio, school district is also seeing a spurt of growth. A bedroom community that has become a suburb of both Akron and Cleveland, the district now has just over 7,000 students and has a kindergarten center, five elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school. Its residents passed a \$77 million bond in 1999 to build the fifth elementary school, expand and renovate the high school, expand technology, and buy land for future development.

Before the bond was passed, Superintendent Charles M. Irish and the school board had already chosen an architecture firm and contractors and had created preliminary plans for the projects. It’s important to present such plans when asking a community to approve a bond, Mr. Irish said, because the community needs to have a vision of how their tax money will be spent.

Once the elementary school construction began, Superintendent Irish met weekly with the business manager and construction managers to monitor the process and help make vital decisions.

“The role of the superintendent is the keeper of the vision,” Mr. Irish said. Often, he said, with so many people working on a project, changes can be made and the project can unknowingly shift towards a different direction than planned.

“It is so important that the superintendent can be the person who can stand back and ensure that the project moves forward in the way it was planned,” he added. “It is important that the superintendent is informed of everything going on, and they need to be involved in major decisions that surround the project.”

For example, the district’s high school is now in the midst of undergoing dramatic changes. It will grow from 170,000 to 540,000 square feet and will include new areas such as community recreation facilities, a health clinic and an auditorium that local residents can enjoy as well as students. The architects had drawn plans that included large, open, light-filled spaces to connect the old building with the new additions. But, to save money, the contractor had downsized those spaces, and had decided that some of the old classrooms did not need to be renovated. Mr. Irish reversed that decision, as he felt that the project needed to abide by the original plans because those were what had been promised to the community.

He said he frequently evokes “the 51 percent rule” to resolve issues between all the different parties involved.

Further, Mr. Irish encourages superintendents to be very involved in the process of building or renovating schools. But he says many superintendents try to take on too

“One thing we found that’s very important to do is to contact administrators directly... Superintendents have a tenure that’s really less than five years in many cases so they build long-lasting relationship with particular firms and these relationships are maintained as they move on to other districts. And that trust that these firms establish with you early on is critical... You’re definitely one step ahead if the superintendent already knows you.”

– Kit Dunn, Partner
Ellini & Dunn

many responsibilities, and instead should delegate tasks and also should consider hiring consultants to help and offer expertise.

Coalition for Adequate School Housing (CASH) Conference *Case Study, February 23, 2000*

The Sebastopol Union School District is similar to many small and medium sized districts in California, struggling with few resources within its district to provide leadership for its programs and staff and representation of its constituents. Similar to many districts, facility planning and development requires resources well beyond the capacity and expertise of its staff.

Sebastopol, a district of approximately 1,400 students and three regular schools, recognized a substantial need to modernize all three schools and construct additional facilities. Through a local bond and several state applications to the Office of Public School Construction, the district endeavored to modernize all three schools, build two new libraries, a multipurpose facility and a joint use gymnasium at its Middle School. After considerable planning and design, the district discovered that Brook Haven Middle School was situated on extreme liquifiable soils and was determined unsafe for future occupancy. The eventual decision to fully demolish the school and replace the entire facility required the design and management for five major projects of modernization and new construction simultaneously, which also included the need for immediate mitigation of unsafe conditions.

Fortunately, the district had taken the necessary steps to ensure effective leadership for the development of its facilities. A team comprised of the district superintendent, the architect, a construction manager, and a facility/financial consultant was formed and structured early in the process, ready for the challenges that arose. As a result of the work of this collaborative and creative team, the district has reorganized its priorities for facilities, achieved both facility and financial hardships from the State Allocation Board, completed several major projects, acquired approximately \$18 million through a local bond and state eligibility and managed the design, construction and finances of each of its projects successfully.

School construction has become increasingly complex. Districts the size of Sebastopol are generally ill-equipped to engage in such large and comprehensive projects. Through contractual agreements, a facility development team directly supervised by the district superintendent can succeed at the school construction "game" in an effective manner similar to large school districts that enjoy well developed facility departments.

Major Roles of the Facility Development Team

District Representative – Ken Ranella, Superintendent

- Provide leadership of the facility development team, representing the interests of the District through all phases of the facility development process.

Architectural Services – Mark Quattrocchi, AIA

- Provide architectural services, including the establishment of district needs, assessment of facility conditions, design development for projects, cost analysis,

assistance with State applications, bidding and contracts, monitoring construction and assistance with close-out.

Construction/Project Management – Ralph Caputo

- Represent the district in overall guidance of the program budgeting, provide assistance with design and cost analyses. Directly supervise construction, manage schedules, and assist the district with “move-in” and project close-out.

Facility/Financial Consultant – Jim Patton & Associates

- Represent the district to the Office of Public School Construction and the State Allocation Board in all phases of the facility development process.

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Special Thanks To:

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Julie Barrett, Pinnacle One
Pamela Loeffelman, Perkins Eastman Architects
Kerry Leonard, OWP&P
Dr. Larry Lysell, Republic County (Ks) Unified School District
Ed Peters, Edmonds (Ca) School District