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Controversial \$1.3 Billion iPad Deal FBI Seizes LAUSD's iPad Documents

Dec. 2, 2014 | By Christine Armario | www.utsandiego.com

EXCERPT: LOS ANGELES (AP) - The U.S. attorney's office subpoenaed the Los Angeles Unified School District for records pertaining to its \$1 billion iPad project as part of a federal grand jury probe.

A copy of the subpoena released Tuesday requests all documents related to proposals for the district's cornerstone technology initiative, which has been plagued with problems since its rollout last year. The requested records include proposal scoring documents, review committee files and employee information, among other materials.

LAUSD general counsel David Holmquist told The Associated Press the district was expecting federal agents to visit and retrieve documents toward the end of the week. Instead FBI agents arrived at district offices on Monday, carting away about 20 boxes worth of records. ...

The program was championed by then-Superintendent John Deasy and approved unanimously by the school board in 2013. ...

While it remained unclear exactly what aspect of the iPad project - one of the biggest technological undertakings by an urban district in the U.S. - the FBI was investigating, legal experts and education observers immediately focused on Deasy's relationship with Apple and Pearson and the use of construction bond proceeds to spend money on a short-term device purchase.

Ariel Neuman, a former federal prosecutor, said the government is likely investigating possible fraud involving the contracts.

"If someone doesn't disclose a relationship they have with Apple," he said, "those could be material omissions that could lead to a wire or mail fraud case."

Interim Superintendent Ramon Cortines had planned to move forward with equipping an additional 27 schools with learning devices, but said Tuesday he was canceling the contract and starting another. Cortines said he made the decision based on "identified flaws" in the L.A. Unified inspector general's report on device procurement.

He added that the district would continue with a different contract with Apple to provide iPads and another vendor, Arey Jones, to provide Chromebooks for a new set of exams in the spring aligned to the Common Core, the new academic benchmarks being implemented in California and other states around the nation. ...

To read complete article, please visit:
<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2014/dec/02/fbi-seizes-los-angeles-schools-ipad-documents/>

LAUSD Eyeing More Bonds as Funds for School Repairs Dwindle

Nov. 17, 2014 | By Annie Gilbertson | www.scp.org

EXCERPT: Los Angeles Unified School District officials estimate another \$40 billion is needed to replace roofs, upgrade plumbing and repair hundreds of aging campuses - but first they'll need the voters' blessing. ...

A request to sell more bonds is all but sure to find its way onto future ballots, said Roger Finstad, director of maintenance and operations for L.A. Unified. "It's inevitable," he said. "We want our students and staff to be in buildings and on grounds that are in good condition, where the roofs don't leak and the air conditioning works."

The campaign for more funds - expected within the next decade - may face opposition from voters feeling burned by controversial and over-budget projects.

"I'm not voting for any bonds," said Monica Whalen, a parent and teacher at Franklin High School in Highland Park, a school approaching its centennial. "They wasted the funds on the iPads. They didn't repair the problems the schools are facing," she said.

The district set aside \$1.3 billion in school construction and modernization bond funds to supply every student and teacher with a tablet, education software and to upgrade campus Wi-Fi.

Meanwhile, the district is chipping away at a backlog of 50,000 repairs, be they leaks in the district's 40,200 drinking fountains or problems with its 68,000 heating and air conditioners.

KPCC reported in September the backlog included 200 fire safety concerns such as aging alarms, outdated extinguishers and leaking sprinklers.

District officials have found many of these repairs are routine maintenance and not bond fundable. Bonds are typically used to replace a roof not fix a leak.

Since 1997, voters agreed to a property tax hike to pay for \$19.5 billion for school construction and improvements through several bond measures.

The district built 130 new schools to relieve overcrowding, but now it faces the opposite problem - fewer and fewer students.

A recent Moody's report outlined financial concerns stemming from declining enrollment, though the investor service still rates L.A. Unified highly (Aa2 stable).

By next spring, district officials said they'll begin planning to sell the last package of bonds that voters approved, Measure Q's \$7 billion. ...

To read the complete blog please visit:
<http://www.scp.org/blogs/education/2014/11/17/17561/lausd-eyeing-more-bonds-as-funds-for-school-repair/>

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May 8, 2015, Friday

Pay to Play in School Bond Measures-What it is and Why it is Wrong
[2014CaLBOC_PaytoPlay.pdf](#)
Presented by Lori Raineri of Government Financial Strategies, GFS

Mission Statement

To promote school district accountability by improving the training and resources available to California's Proposition 39 School Bond Oversight Committees and educating the state legislature, local school boards and the public about the oversight and reporting powers these Citizens' Bond Oversight Committees (CBOCs) have, and to advocate on a state level, where appropriate, on issues of common concern to all CBOCs.

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