

# Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report 1208

## School Bond Oversight Committees

### Raising the Bar

Report by the 2011-2012 CCC Grand Jury, May 10, 2012

**EXCERPTS: Recommendations (partial list of 12 Recommendations)**

1. A district's ballot language should inform voters of all intended uses of bond funds, the specific projects to be undertaken, the schools where the projects will be undertaken, the district's initial priorities, and a realistic estimate of project costs. ....
3. In recruiting candidates for appointment to oversight committees, a district should seek nominations from the groups required to be represented on the committee by Education Code Section 15282(a). ...
5. A district should require all candidates for bond oversight committees to submit written applications listing their background, qualifications, a statement of interest, and disclosure of any prior employment by, or prior involvement or business relationship with, the district.
6. A district should make available to committee members, for their consideration in creating committee bylaws and operating procedures, copies of: *(Links provided below may take you to another website)*

- California League of Bond Oversight Committee recommended Best Practices *(One page: [calboc.com/reports/CBOCprocedures.pdf](http://calboc.com/reports/CBOCprocedures.pdf) )*
- San Diego County Taxpayers Association "Oversight Committee Best Practices" guide *(5 pages + 35 pages of appendixes, 3.4MB: [BOARD APPROVED Oversight Committee Best Practices and Appendix. 2-2-2010\\_AH.pdf](#) )*
- California Coalition for Adequate School Housing "Proposition 39-Best Practices Handbook" *(Link to PDFs: [www.cashnet.org/resource-material/Proposition39BestPracticesHandbook.html](http://www.cashnet.org/resource-material/Proposition39BestPracticesHandbook.html) )*
- Little Hoover Commission 2009 Report "Bond Spending: Expanding and Enhancing Oversight" [www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/197/report197.pdf](http://www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/197/report197.pdf)
- California League of Cities "A Guide to the Ralph M. Brown Act" <http://www.cacities.org/Resources-Documents/Member-Engagement/Professional-Departments/City-Attorneys/Publications/Open-Public-IV--A-Guide-to-the-Ralph-M-Brown-Act->
- State Controller's Office 2011 Audit Report on the Los Angeles Community College District's bond construction program [scribd.com/doc/62045941/California-State-Controller-s-Audit-of-Los-Angeles-Community-College-District-Prop-AA-Measure-J-Bond-Expenditures](http://scribd.com/doc/62045941/California-State-Controller-s-Audit-of-Los-Angeles-Community-College-District-Prop-AA-Measure-J-Bond-Expenditures)

9. A district should provide financial data and reports to committee members sufficiently prior to meetings to permit meaningful and effective review and oversight. ....

**Complete 13 page CCC Grand Jury Report (1.5MB): [CCCGJ1208.pdf](#)**

## School bond watchdog rule unenforced

### Citizen committees supposed to monitor spending

Natasha Lindstrom, Staff Writer | June 17, 2012

**EXCERPT:** Under California law, school districts that pass bond measures must create a citizen's oversight committee - a group of at least seven community members charged with ensuring taxpayer-backed bond money isn't misspent or wasted. But if a district shirks that mandate, it's not likely to get caught. No state body is enforcing the rule, and no penalties are in place for violating it.

In one local case, Helendale School District officials cannot provide records - agendas, minutes or even dates - of any oversight committee meetings for more than a year after its watchdog group should've been formed to review decisions around a \$20 million bond measure approved in 2008. ...

... A 2009 report by the Little Hoover Commission criticized oversight procedures for Prop. 39, expressing concerns over school districts thwarting the committees by not properly educating members or denying them opportunities to engage the public. The report also stated that many districts weren't conducting the required performance audits.

"The oversight committee, it was the effort to put lipstick on a pig was basically what it was. It's all cosmetic," said Kris Vosburgh, spokesman for the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, which opposed Prop. 39 altogether for making it easier to raise property taxes. "Part of the problem is the people who are sitting on these committees are selected by the same people who put the bonds on the ballot."

There have been efforts to make bond oversight committees more effective, such as training offered by the nonprofit California League of Bond Oversight Committees. .... A district not following bond election law, Dresslar said, could risk a lawsuit from a local taxpayer to invalidate the bonds - ... **For complete article please visit:**

[www.vvdailypress.com/news/school-35090-bond-create.html](http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/school-35090-bond-create.html)

[Complete URLs to links](#)

## Contra Costa County CaBOC Chapter

First Meeting

**June 23, 2012**

10 AM - 12 PM

La Tapatia Restaurant

536 Main Street

Martinez, CA 94553

**[REGISTER HERE](#)**

**TOPICS:**

**Organization of Chapter**

**The Contra Costa County  
Grand Jury Report**

*The report is to the*

*Governing Boards of:*

Acalanes Union School,  
Antioch Unified School  
District, Byron Union School  
District, Contra Costa  
Community College District,  
John Swett Unified School  
District, Martinez Unified  
School District, Mt. Diablo  
Unified School District,  
Pittsburg Unified School  
District, West Contra Costa  
Unified School District.

**The Next CaBOC  
Board Meeting is  
November 9, 2012**

10 am - 3 pm

Sacramento

Conference call service will  
be available.

**Mission Statement**

**What is Our Mission**

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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