



## Custodial Staffing and Cleanliness Standards

*Significant Maintenance Deficiencies at Some Schools May Place Students' Safety and Learning at Risk*

### Background

In the past 20 years, research has shown that poor school facility conditions can lead to poor student outcomes, such as lower graduation rates. State law requires schools to be inspected annually using the Facility Inspection Tool (FIT) or a similar tool. Such inspections cover both maintenance and cleanliness of the schools. School districts include the results of inspections in the schools' publicly available School Accountability Report Cards (SARCs).

### We Identified Significant Maintenance Deficiencies at Many Schools That Were Not Reflected in Prior Scores



This school scored its exterior as *fair*

The asphalt of one of the basketball courts was heavily cracked and had standing water.



This school scored its interior as *good*

Many classrooms had stained and broken ceiling tiles, indicating a leaking roof.

### Key Findings

1. We observed that school SARCs did not accurately reflect current conditions.
  - a. All 18 schools we reviewed across California failed to meet all Good Repair Standards set by state law. Our inspections most commonly assigned these schools *poor* or *fair* scores in the *Safety* and *Interior* categories.
  - b. Many schools we inspected exhibited deficiencies that the schools did not report in their SARCs. For example, several of the roofs we inspected appeared to be in need of replacement.
  - c. Schools frequently report inaccurate FIT scores in their SARCs, which results in incomplete information for parents or guardians about the conditions of the schools their students attend.
2. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), which is responsible for the majority of school funding statewide, does not provide dedicated funding for maintenance, and schools often cited the need for additional funding to address day-to-day maintenance concerns.
3. There are opportunities to improve the FIT.
  - a. The FIT does not provide guidance for rating specialized classrooms such as auto shops and agricultural teaching settings. It also provides few examples of deficiencies and extreme deficiencies in standard classrooms.
  - b. The FIT only accounts for two types of deficiencies, which may not adequately account for the number or severity of deficiencies. This can lead to inaccurate FIT scores.

### Key Recommendations

1. The Legislature should consider providing funding to school districts that is separate from the LCFF and dedicated specifically to day-to-day maintenance activities.
2. The Department of General Services should update the FIT to include a broader range of deficiency ratings and additional types of classroom environments to more accurately reflect school conditions.