

Private Schools Earthquake Safety Working Group

Dear School Administrator:

A Private Schools Earthquake Safety Working Group was recently formed as part of the City's Earthquake Safety Implementation Program. This program has the long-term goal of implementing the earthquake hazard reduction recommendations of CAPSS, the Community Action Plan for Seismic Safety, completed in December 2010. We would like to inform your school about this effort and invite you to follow the work of this group and to participate in this working group's activities. Please contact the persons listed below for information and updates. For detailed information about the CAPSS study and the Earthquake Safety Implementation Program, please visit www.sfcapss.org.

Background: There is a common expectation of parents, school officials and the public that all school buildings in California are subject to the same strict regulations regarding structural safety in earthquakes. In fact, private school buildings are governed by codes that are significantly less rigorous than the strict requirements for public schools mandated by the Field Act, adopted following the 1933 Long Beach earthquake. These differing standards of school earthquake safety could mean that some private school buildings in San Francisco may not meet public expectations for damage, risk of collapse, injuries or loss of life in likely future earthquakes. This is a particularly significant issue in San Francisco, where about one-third of San Francisco's children attend private schools—the highest percentage in the state.

Moving Forward: The Private Schools Earthquake Safety Working Group, comprised of volunteer parents, school representatives, other interested persons, and City staff, is studying the technical and policy issues related to the earthquake risk of private school buildings in San Francisco, and will propose ideas for how the City may best address private school safety. The group will explore challenging issues such as community expectation for school safety, evaluation of earthquake risk, and potential building improvement opportunities. No evaluations of individual school buildings will be performed as part of this work, rather the studies will look generally at the types, age and distribution of buildings used for private schools. A report on the findings of this Working Group are planned to be delivered to the City Administrator and the Mayor in late 2013.

If you would like to receive information about the activities of the Working Group by email or to participate in the Working Group, please contact:

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