

\$98 Million Bond Measure Addressed at WISSPA Meeting

By [South Pasadena Review Online](#) – Dana Farrar
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Without \$98 million in funding for repairs and upgrades, our schools eventually will “end up looking like the Rialto,” because there is no state funding for improvements, according to “Yes on SP” campaign co-chair Yuki Cutcheon.

At Saturday’s meeting of Women Involved in South Pasadena Political Action (WISPPA), Cutcheon and co-chair Jean Zenas also emphasized that the timing is right for this city taxpayer-funded bond on the November ballot. This is because the district might also receive matching funds from the state if voters throughout California also approve Proposition 51, which is seeking \$9 billion to upgrade aging campuses statewide, they said.

School Board President Julie Giulioni discussed the board’s process of gathering community input and the need for dedicated arts facilities at each campus. She also emphasized the need to modernize and preserve historic auditoriums at both secondary schools. Three other school board members attended the meeting but were not involved in the presentation.

Superintendent Geoff Yantz stressed the need to maintain excellence in local schools and referred to a recent ranking system that placed South Pasadena fifth in the state based on test scores. Yantz said SPUSD is the “most diverse” of the highest performing school districts.

Deb Fox commented that “we seem to be on a cycle of these bond measures” and asked why “temporary” bungalows were not removed previously. Yantz and Giulioni said that Measure L upgraded the high school and Measure M focused on the middle school. Both have yet to sunset.

Architect Rebecca Thompson commented that she has seen many school bond projects “fall amazingly short of their goals because a huge chunk was taken up by construction management” and unforeseen changes. Giulioni said 3% to 5% of the bond money is earmarked for such fees.

Yantz, who spearheaded a \$14-million construction bond in El Segundo in 2008 that spent about 7% on fees, said the district hopes to attract people with financial and construction experience to the state-mandated oversight panel and that it would consider hiring a staff person to manage Measure SP’s long list of projects at all five district campuses.

Other goals for the bond money – which would levy a fee to property owners of \$60 per \$100,000 of assessed value each year for 30 years – include eliminating bungalows, earthquake retrofitting, removing hazardous materials such as asbestos and lead, and replacing air conditioning units. A full report on the scope of proposed construction can be found at www.spusd.net.