



CEPS History and Timeline

1999 – 2022

Early 1999

Linda Gross and Ralph Mechur convene a “casual gathering” to discuss and strategize ways to support and develop funding sources for SMMUSD with Superintendent Neil Schmidt. The group, sought out to represent broad political cross section (SMRR and Chamber, Education Foundation, PTA, vocal parents), generally meets over lunch on Fridays.

Fall 2000

School Board places Measure Y on the ballot to renew the parcel tax at \$98 per parcel. Members of the group that eventually becomes known as CEPS play key leadership roles in Measure Y campaign. Measure Y passes easily.

2000-2002

Members continue to meet on regular basis. Each year prior to key points in the City of Santa Monica’s budget cycle, members lobby City Council members and prepare remarks for Council meetings: January for mid-year budget review and priority sessions; May for budget priority setting; June for annual budget adoption.

CEPS starts considering the possibility of sponsoring a ballot measure to ensure a reliable, ongoing, long-term stream of funding from the City of Santa Monica. Such a measure would require a simple 50% majority, versus a parcel tax measure, requiring a 66.7% majority.

Spring 2002

Financial impact of looming state budget cuts becomes apparent; SMMUSD decides to analyze the feasibility of an additional parcel tax election. CEPS becomes a key backbone of the ad hoc committee and the subsequent Measure EE campaign committee.

Fall 2002

CEPS members become fully committed to working to pass Measure EE. Measure EE fails, garnering 62% of the vote, but falling short of the required 66.7%.

December 2002-June 2003

CEPS plays key leadership roles in a series of efforts to solve the financial crisis facing SMMUSD:

- Ad Hoc Committee convenes to discuss options available to the Board – CEPS members serve in leadership roles on this committee. Committee recommends Special Election and Board approves placement of Measure S, a \$225 per parcel levy, on ballot.
- Pink Slip Parade – SMM PTA Council organizes major participatory event to bring public attention to the severe budget situation; thousands of parents, students and community members march several blocks and hold rally on the 3rd Street Promenade. CEPS helps organize, publicize and recruit participants for Pink Slip Parade.
- Over 1,000 education supporters converge on City Hall for City Council’s January mid-year budget review meeting, promenading through Council Chambers and presenting scrolls of signatures to request City Council’s financial assistance during dire financial crisis caused by state budget woes. Council Members comment that it is the most people ever to show up to a Council meeting on one issue.
- Measure S Campaign -- INTENSIVE ORGANIZING EFFORT led by CEPS goes into the implementation of this campaign. Measure S passes (by a 120 vote margin) on June 3, 2003 with a 66.7% majority.
- June 10, 2003 Santa Monica City Budget Adoption meeting – PTA, SMMCTA, SEIU, CEPS sponsor boisterous rally with hundreds of parents, students, and other supporters, on lawn of City Hall, led by then-Supt. John Deasy, Jackson Browne and Shari Davis. Council approves short term funds for District, but does not commit to long term funding.

During this period, CEPS officially becomes a political action committee and encourages parents and others supporting excellent public schools to become members. Louise Jaffe and Shari Davis become co-chairs.

Summer 2003

CEPS convenes meetings to discuss the drafting of an Amendment to the City Charter creating an annual contribution formula from City of SM to SMMUSD. CEPS hires legal counsel and drafts measure, anticipating November 2004 election.

January 2004

CEPS files proposed amendment to the Charter of the City of Santa Monica.

Between January and May, CEPS raises over \$100,000 and gathers 15,000 signatures to qualify proposed charter amendment for the local ballot in the November 2004 municipal election.

May 2004

Supt. Deasy and City Manager McCarthy reach mutually agreeable terms, subsequently ratified by CEPS, School Board and City Council, yielding \$6 million per year via a Facilities Use Agreement. CEPS commits to not turn in signatures that would trigger placement of the Charter Amendment on the ballot.

September 2004

CEPS hosts **Candidates Forum** to provide opportunity to have voters hear City Council and School Board candidates' views on supporting education. CEPS decides to endorse three School Board candidates and to rate City Council candidates in the November 2004 election. CEPS runs one "voice blast," and produces two mail pieces, created in partnership with SMMCTA, mailed to large targeted list of voters in the District.

CEPS also endorses and campaigns in support of Measure N, a 2% increase in the City of Santa Monica's hotel visitors tax, with the understanding that it would "ease the burden" of increasing school funding via the Joint Facilities contract.

January 2005

CEPS launches effort to advocate at the state level for greater funding for public schools, establishing partnership with California State PTA and creating two day event: **Caravan for Kids**.

April 27-28, 2005

Caravan for Kids comprises 8 press conferences at school sites in California's major media markets, hundreds of students and parents boarding buses bound for Sacramento, and a 2,000-person rally for "Making California Schools Great Again" on the steps of the State Capitol.

May 2005

RAND holds Forum on California's K-12 Funding, co-sponsored by CEPS.

November 2005

CEPS joins PTA in opposing one of Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed initiatives in California's statewide special election. Mail pieces created and sent to 20,000 voters.

May 2006

State of Our Schools event created and organized by CEPS, highlights achievements of Santa Monica High School and Malibu High School, with presentations in both communities.

June 2006

CEPS endorses Glean Davis for Santa Monica City Council.

September – November 2006

CEPS cultivates questionnaires to solicit input from candidates for School Board, SM City Council and SM College Board; decides to endorse 8 candidates and rate 4 others; Education Voter Guides sent to 19,000 voters twice regarding these candidate recommendations and supporting Measure BB; voice messages telephonically sent to voters endorsing Glean Davis; ads placed in all local papers.

January – June 2007

Focusing on terms of the Facilities Use Agreement between SMMUSD and City of Santa Monica, CEPS begins lobbying efforts to support increasing the annual amount of funding conveyed to the District from the City. In June 2007, City Council agrees to increase the approximately \$7 million by \$529,000, based on the City's increased revenues, conditioned upon certain provisions to improve Special Education services, including imposing a moratorium on requiring parents to sign confidentiality clauses.

Summer 2007

CEPS leadership serves as core of ad hoc committee to analyze and recommend to the School Board that a renewal of two parcel taxes with impending expiration dates, be placed on the February 5, 2008 ballot. CEPS co-founder Ralph Mechur is appointed to Board of Education.

October 2007 - February 2008

CEPS Chair Shari Davis becomes Chair of the Yes on Measure R Campaign, and joining other parent leaders from throughout the District, CEPS Steering Committee devotes 100% of its efforts to the campaign. Raising \$275,000, producing 13 pieces of direct mail, and organizing massive volunteer voter outreach, Yes on R succeeds in garnering 73% of the vote, putting into place permanent funding of \$11 million a year, plus annual cost of living adjustments, for SMMUSD.

November 2007

CEPS organizes and hosts second annual State of Our Schools forums in Santa Monica and Malibu.

Spring 2008

CEPS participates in collaborative strategy/problem-solving sessions on Special Education issues, alongside Special Ed DAC Chairs Ken Haker and Lee Jones, PTA Council President Rebecca Kennerly, Board Members Barry Snell and Kelly Pye, and Superintendent Talarico.

July 2008

CEPS Steering Committee continues strategy sessions to advocate for release of \$529,000 in funding from City of Santa Monica (portion of Master Facilities Use Agreement funds held back on condition of meeting Special Education improvement benchmarks).

January 2009

Santa Monica City Council votes to release \$529,000 to SMMUSD.

February 2009

CEPS and SMMPTA Council co-sponsor and organize the third **State of Our Schools** events in Santa Monica and Malibu, in conjunction with Public Schools Week.

March 2009

Gleam Davis appointed to Santa Monica City Council; resigns voting position on CEPS Steering Committee.

April 2009

Santa Monica City Council approves three year renewal of Master Facilities Use Agreement (the “contract”), continuing the \$7.4 million per year in funding, with annual cost of living adjustments.

May 2009

Santa Monica City Council gives priority to \$81 million in redevelopment debt capacity for Civic Center Joint Use Project (CCJUP), advocated for by Santa Monica High School coalition, including CEPS.

January 2010

School Board votes to place a funding measure on a May 25 special election all-mail ballot, proposing to levy a \$198 per-parcel emergency and temporary tax to help schools weather the state fiscal crisis. CEPS again actively works on campaign, co-chaired by Rochelle Fanali and CEPS Steering Committee members Lauri Crane, Denny Zane and Wendy Sidley.

May 25, 2010

Measure A garners 64% of the vote, falling just short of the 2/3 majority needed to pass.

May – August 2010

Entire education community coalesces to launch “Save Our Schools,” the emergency fundraising effort that raised \$1.6 million to stave off the worst of the \$5.7 million in cuts made in the wake of Measure A’s failure.

July 2010

Approaching CEPS leaders, Santa Monica City Manager Rod Gould proposes a transaction and use tax, and the Santa Monica City Council votes to place the measure on the November 2010 ballot, with a companion measure that advises half the funds generated to be directed to local schools. CEPS is backbone of the Yes on Y+YY campaign, co-chaired by Shari Davis and Tom Larmore.

October 2010

CEPS co-sponsors fourth **State of Our Schools** events in Santa Monica and Malibu.

November 2, 2010

Propositions Y and YY pass.

June 2011

School Board approves the terms of the agreement that provides the mechanism for half of the Prop. Y revenues to be conveyed to SMMUSD. CEPS Steering Committee members play key roles in developing language and advocating for the agreement. City of Santa Monica projects that SMMUSD will receive \$5.7 million from Prop.Y funds in 2011-12.

November 2012

CEPS endorses successful City Council candidates Gleam Davis, Terry O'Day and Ted Winterer (in addition to candidates for School Board, College Board, Assembly).

November 2013

CEPS supports SMMEF in the Vision for Student Success campaign.

November 2014

CEPS endorses successful City Council candidate Pam O'Connor (in addition to candidates for School Board, College Board, Assembly, Senate).

November 2016

CEPS actively participates in strategy sessions leading to the placement of Measures GSH and GS on the City of Santa Monica ballot, creating another ½% Transaction and Use Tax, as well as Measure V, a \$345 million facilities bond for Santa Monica College. CEPS endorses these measures and actively campaigns for their passage through four different campaign mailers. CEPS also endorses pro-education incumbents Gleam Davis, Terry O'Day, Ted Winterer and Tony Vazquez, who are re-elected to the Santa Monica City Council, as well as SMC Trustees Susan Aminoff, Margaret Quinones-Perez and Rob Rader, who also are successful in their re-election bids.

November 2018

CEPS endorses successful City Council candidates Sue Himmelrich, Kevin McKeown, and Greg Morena (in addition to incumbent candidates for School Board and College Board). CEPS also plays a key role in the successful campaigns for the Santa Monica and Malibu bond measures (SMS and M, respectively).

November 2020

In this mid-pandemic election, longtime CEPS-supported City Councilmember Gleam Davis was re-elected, and Kristin McCowan was elected to fill a two-year term. CEPS supported newcomer Jennifer Smith, a long-time CEPS activist, who was elected to the School Board, along with CEPS-endorsed incumbents Jon Kean and Maria Leon Vazquez; and Susan Aminoff, Margaret Quinones-Perez and Rob Greenstein Rader to the College Board.

January 2021

CEPS strongly supported the Santa Monica High School Campus Master Plan, and turned out numerous speakers to back up the rationale behind replacing the aging and obsolete buildings on campus with modern facilities to meet the needs of 21st century learning.

January 2022

CEPS advocates for the City of Santa Monica and the School District to renew the Master Facilities Use Agreement. The Agreement was renewed for a five-year term.

November 2022

CEPS will be endorsing candidates for Santa Monica City Council, School Board and College Board and has endorsed the Santa Monica College facilities bond measure to support affordable, equitable learning for post-secondary students and the community.

In 2022-23, the annual revenue to be generated from the efforts initiated by CEPS for SMMUSD will be \$38 million, bringing the total revenue generated by them to \$480,000,000. These revenue sources do not sunset and increase each year.

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