

# DISASTER-PROOF SCHOOLS A National Challenge



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PLENARY: CREATING SAFE SCHOOLS  
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“Schools answer vulnerability with preparedness . . .”

“Buildings, Not Drills, Hold Key to Disaster Proof Schools”

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“ . . . Students dropped, covered, and held on in aging buildings that have never been strengthened to withstand earthquake shaking. As school safety advocates in three cities whose public schools share those deficiencies, **that disconnect disturbs us.**”

Molalla High School, Molalla, Oregon  
Destroyed by Scotts Mills earthquake (M 5.6), 1993



Photo by E. Roeloffs

“Isn’t it time for state legislators,  
who mandate school attendance,  
to sweep complacency aside and  
fix schools with deadly defects?”

Students exit Grant High School (URM, built 1923) after  
earthquake drill, May 2011, Portland, Oregon



## Memphis City Schools/Shelby County

“The school district’s latest five-year capital plan does not mention the word ‘earthquake.’”

## Central High School, Memphis, Tennessee Unreinforced Masonry (URM), Built 1911



## UTAH



“State lawmakers, even in family-friendly Utah,  
have yet to take up the cause.”

### Clearfield High School, Davis County, Utah Opened 1961



## UT Schools RVS Pilot Study



September 2010 – January 2011

- FEMA supported (cooperative agreement funding, training and technical support)
- Survey 128 school buildings throughout state
- Structural engineers as screeners
- Used study to support legislative efforts
- Published “Utah Students at Risk”

## OREGON



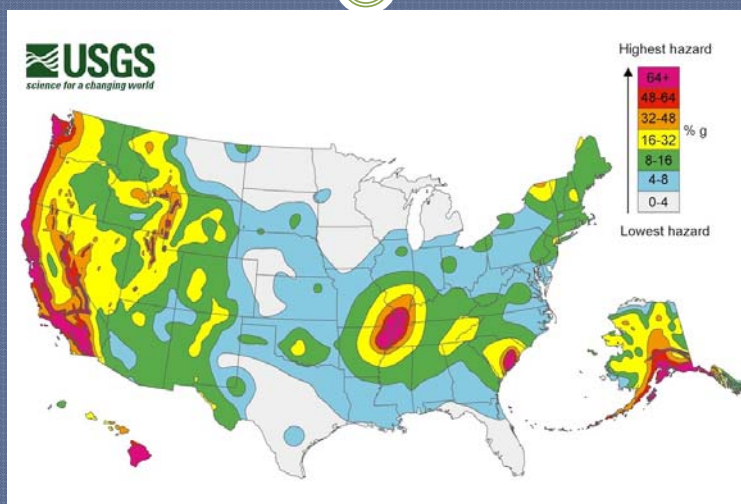
“A state grant program . . . received \$7.5 million in life support from legislators in 2011. A couple of dozen schools will be fixed, but hundreds remain dangerous.”

Franklin High School, Portland, Oregon  
Unreinforced Masonry (URM), Built 1915



“We persist in quixotic exercises,  
staging earthquake drills  
in classrooms that could pancake  
the day an actual earthquake strikes.”

## A national challenge . . .



## THEMES FOR A NATIONAL CONVERSATION

- ✓ Mandate to educate = mandate to protect
- ✓ Document the vulnerability
- ✓ Expand the conversation
- ✓ Grow the constituency
- ✓ Recruit champions and allies
- ✓ Justify the investments
- ✓ Expect setbacks
- ✓ Celebrate accomplishments!



Floyd Light Middle School, Portland, Oregon  
Retrofit with state support, summer 2011



*Image © Sam Tenney*



“EVERY CHILD  
HAS A RIGHT TO ATTEND SCHOOL  
IN SAFE BUILDINGS.”

SAFE@SCHOOL FRAMEWORK OF PRINCIPLES

ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION (2011)

