Appendix D

Guidelines for Distinguishing Between Supplies and Equipment

One common accounting challenge districts face is that of distinguishing between supplies and equipment, between equipment and improvement of grounds, and between equipment/building fixtures and service systems. Nevertheless, districts must correctly identify each expenditure if they are to achieve the necessary uniformity of accounting.

Whether an item should be classified as equipment or as supplies is determined on the basis of the length of time the item is serviceable and on its contribution to the value of the district. For example, supplies are constantly being consumed and replaced without increasing the value of the physical properties of the district. Equipment has relatively permanent value, and its purchase increases the value of the physical assets of the district.

Expenditures made by districts for equipment, improvement of sites, building fixtures and service systems are charged as capital outlay; expenditures for supplies are charged as current expense. The purchase of equipment either as direct purchase or lease-purchase must be recorded in object classification 6400, Equipment.

Supplies are items of expendable nature that are consumed or worn out, deteriorate in use, or are easily broken, damaged or lost. Examples include paper, pencils, cleaning materials, nails, scissors, test tubes, and keys.

Items that have a relatively short service life (less than one year) and that, therefore, must be replaced frequently are also charged as supplies. Examples include brooms, tools, and rubber stamps.

Computer software and hardware could fall into either category, supplies or equipment, depending on the cost and useful life. To determine which category of expenditure an item belongs, follow the questions and/or guidelines listed below.

Some articles clearly cannot be classified as either supplies or equipment. They have the characteristics of equipment, but they have a low unit cost or are frequently lost, broken or worn out and replaced in normal use. To obtain uniformity, the district should assign items to the various classifications on the basis of the answers to the questions in the list below:

1. Does the item lose its original shape and appearance with use?
2. Is it consumable, with a normal service life of less than one year?

3. Is it easily broken, damaged, or lost in normal use?
4. Is it usually more feasible to replace it with an entirely new unit than to repair it?
5. Is it an inexpensive item? Does the small unit cost make it inadvisable to inventory the item? See *Education Code* Section 81600.

If the answer to one of the above five questions is yes, the item should be classified as a supply item and the expenditure should be recorded within object classification 4000. If all answers are no, the item should be classified under object classification 6400, Equipment.

Another method of distinguishing equipment from supplies is to follow the useful flowchart below.

Guidelines for Distinguishing Equipment from Supply Items
(Listed in Priority Order)

Lasts more than one year	⇒	NO	
⇓ Y E S			
Repair rather than replace	⇒	NO	
⇓ Y E S			
Independent unit rather than being incorporated into another unit item	⇒	NO	At first NO item is declared to be SUPPLY
⇓ Y E S			
Cost of tagging and inventory small percent of item cost	⇒	NO	
⇓ Y E S			

EQUIPMENT

By way of example, let us classify both a personal computer and a calculator. The computer is likely to last more than one year, and if it did break down, it is most likely to be repaired. The calculator may last more than one year, but in the event that the calculator stopped working, it

Would be replaced, not repaired. Thus, it would be declared a supply. Although it is not necessary to continue down the list of other criteria, note that many of them support the classification of calculator as supply rather than equipment. It would not be subject to special control, because the cost of keeping inventory on it would represent a large percentage of the cost. Nor is the cost in excess of the minimum dollar value established by the Budget and Accounting Manual. All of these criteria strengthen the classification of calculators as supplies.

NOTE: It is important to note that the policies of a district may override any of these guidelines. Districts may also wish to include in their historical inventories, audit trace inventory system, or any other acceptable inventory system those items whose acquisition costs are less than the amount cited in the Budget and Accounting Manual. It may be desirable for individual districts to establish and maintain Capital Accounts for charging noninventoriable equipment that do not warrant the keeping of inventory records.

Repair parts that the district purchases for buildings, equipment and grounds, regardless of cost, are normally charged as supplies and would be accounted for under object 4000. Examples include plumbing fixtures; compressors, if part of a larger unit; bus transmissions; engines; and timer devices for automatic sprinkling systems.

Repair costs are those outlays which are necessary to keep an asset in its intended operating condition but which do not materially increase the value or physical properties of the asset. These costs would be accounted for under object 5000.

In contrast, all additions and betterments to fixed assets should be charged to a Capital Outlay account when acquired or when construction or installation is completed. An addition refers to a physical extension of some existing asset. A betterment exists when part of an existing asset is replaced by another and the replacement provides a significant increase in the life or value of the asset.

Capital Outlay expenditures are those that result in the acquisition of capital assets or additions to capital assets. They are expenditures for sites, improvement of sites, buildings, improvement of buildings, building fixtures, service systems, and purchase of initial or additional equipment.

Appendix E

Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statements

The following GASB pronouncements are most likely to affect California Community College Districts. This is not an all-inclusive listing of the Statements. Actual copies of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statements may be obtained from the GASB Web Site @ www.gasb.org Technical Issues tab and Summaries/Status.

GASB Statement No.	Title	Effective Date
Statement 34	Basic Financial Statements – and Management's Discussions and Analysis for State and Local Governments	Final Implementation for all Governments was fiscal years ending after June 15, 1999
Statement 35	Basic Financial Statements – and Management's Discussions and Analysis for Public Colleges and Universities – an amendment of GASB Statement 34.	Final Implementation for all Governments was fiscal years ending after June 15, 1999
Statement 36	Recipient Reporting for Certain Shared Nonexchange Revenues – and amendment of Statement 33.	For periods beginning after June 15 2000
Statement 37	Basic Financial Statements – and Management's Discussions and Analysis for State and local Governments: Omnibus – an amendment of Statement 21 and 34.	Final Implementation for all Governments was fiscal years ending after June 15, 2003.
Statement 38	Certain Financial Statement Note Disclosures	Final Implementation for all Governments was fiscal years ending after June 15, 2003
Statement 39	Determining Whether Certain Organizations are Component Units – an amendment of Statement 14.	For periods beginning after June 15, 2003
Statement 40	Deposit and Investment Risk Disclosures – an amendment of Statement 3	For periods beginning after June 15, 2004
Statement 42	Accounting and Financial Reporting for Impairment of Capital Assets and for Insurance Recoveries	For periods beginning after December 15, 2004
Statement 45	Accounting and Financial Reporting by Employers for Postemployment Benefits Other than Pensions	Final Implementation for all Governments was fiscal years ending after December 15, 2008.