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District Playgrounds to be Examined

- Fullerton Schools will hire inspectors to check equipment's safety codes

Fullerton - The school district is putting its playgrounds under the microscope this month to make sure they meet federal safety and accessibility guidelines for children.

Independent inspectors will canvass the district's 19 schools and a \$15,600 study of existing play equipment. "We routinely inspect our own playground equipment and surfaces for maintenance needs," said Karin Lynch, assistant superintendent in charge of administrative services. "But having an independent inspector come out will alert us of any new changes in federal safety regulations and what we can do about it.

The district is required to follow safety codes set by the Americans with Disabilities Act, U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission and American Society of Testing and Materials when repairing or renovating its playgrounds, she added.

[Butch DeFillippo](#), a recreational consultant in charge of the evaluation, said inspectors will make sure the surfaces used under play equipment are not compacted and hard, which could injure students

A recent report by the Consumer Product Safety Commission said 60% of all playground injuries are caused by falls onto hard, unyielding surfaces.

"We used sand for our playground surface, which is, in general, the standard and accepted surface, but we could also use other materials like ground up rubber tires," said Dan Looney, district director of maintenance and operations.

"This report will give us new ideas to look forward to."

Accessibility for disabled students is another district concern, and inspectors, will check for required ramps, pathways and equipment during the evaluation, he added.

Although schools across the district are in the final stages of a large-scale modernization project to update equipment and technology, playgrounds have yet to be included.

"Where new play equipment has been installed, we've addressed the new safety concerns, but we have not done any retrofitting of old equipment yet," Looney said.

The inspection is a proactive approach to student safety and should improve the district and help give students safe play areas, Lynch said.

Inspectors are expected to complete their evaluation in about two months.