

School Construction Reimbursement Criteria

24 P.S. §7-733

DATE OF ISSUE: September 1, 1997

DATE OF REVIEW: February 10, 2009
July 1, 2006
July 1, 2002
July 1, 1998

PURPOSE

The purpose of this BEC is to clarify existing policies governing requests for school construction reimbursement.

1. School districts must develop a complete building facility study of all district educational facilities including the district administration office. The study must be completed prior to, and within two years of, the date of the PlanCon Part A, Project Justification, submission. The study must provide an appraisal as to each facility's ability to meet current and planned educational program requirements, the degree to which the present facilities meet reasonably current construction standards, and an estimated cost of necessary repairs and improvements. Facility studies must contain documentation regarding the authors' credentials for producing the document.
2. A condition for all reimbursement is that the entire building be brought up to prevailing educational standards and reasonably current construction standards. The educational and construction standards applicable to a project will be determined by the Board of School Directors but must be based on applicable construction codes or professional guidelines.
3. School districts should evaluate their early childhood infrastructure as part of any renovation, expansion or new construction of an elementary school. For elementary school projects, school districts should consider providing enough space for pre-kindergarten, full-day kindergarten and preK-3 classes with no more than 17 students per teacher.
4. School districts are encouraged to consider the impact of acoustics, daylighting and other factors on academic effectiveness and building efficiency in the design process. To accomplish this, school administrators should consider the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System (LEED-NC™ or LEED for Schools™) standards or the Green Building Initiative's Green Globes™ Building Rating System

Additional state reimbursement is available for projects receiving silver, gold or platinum LEED-NC™ or LEED for Schools™, or two, three or four Green Globes™ certification. High Performance Green Schools Planning Grants for LEED-NC™ or LEED for Schools™-certified projects are also available to help defray costs which are not typically included in the design fee but which are critical to the design of a high performance building.

The grants are funded by the State Public School Building Authority and jointly administered by the Governor's Green Government Council and the Pennsylvania Department of Education; information is available at [Governor's Green Government Council](#).

5. Additions and renovations of existing buildings are eligible for additional state funding. Therefore, school districts are encouraged to consider building reuse (renovation or expansion) rather than new building construction. In addition, school construction projects should be planned in the context of sustainable community development.
6. School districts should take all reasonable efforts to preserve and protect school buildings that are on or eligible for local or National historic registers. If for safety, educational, economic, or other reasons, it is not feasible to renovate an existing school building, school districts are encouraged to develop an adaptive reuse plan for the building that incorporates an historic easement or covenant to avoid the building's abandonment or demolition.
7. For projects that involve the renovation of structures of more than one story which have wood framing (interior or exterior framing that is wholly or partially of wood), the district must describe the construction plans and methods designed to meet health and safety standards related to the use of wood in the building. This written description will be provided as a part of the PlanCon Part A, Project Justification.
8. The Commonwealth will not reimburse alteration or renovation costs for any building which is less than 20 years old or for which a reimbursable project has been approved within the preceding 20 years unless a request for a variance is approved by the Department. The request for a variance from this requirement must be presented in writing as a resolution of the Board of School Directors and must state the need for such unusual treatment. For all buildings, the time elapsed for this purpose shall be based on the period from the bid opening date of the last reimbursable project to the bid opening date of the planned project.
9. The Commonwealth will not reimburse costs for alterations or renovations to an existing school building (excluding costs specified in the Planning and Construction [PlanCon] Workbook) if the cost of alteration or renovation is less than twenty percent (20%) of the replacement value of the entire building unless a request for a variance is approved by the Department. The request for a variance from this requirement must be presented in writing as a resolution of the Board of School Directors and must state the need for such unusual treatment. The replacement value will be computed by multiplying the full-time equivalent (FTE) capacity of an existing facility by 92 square feet for elementary buildings and 123 square feet for secondary buildings multiplied by the cost of new construction, such cost to be determined annually by the Department.
10. Costs for asbestos abatement not greater than twenty percent (20%) of other approved alteration costs (i.e., alteration costs excluding the cost for asbestos abatement, roof replacement and site development) will be considered eligible for reimbursement as part of a PlanCon project. This policy does not change the calculations for determining the maximum formula amount for reimbursement.

11. Costs for roof replacement not greater than twenty percent (20%) of other approved alteration costs (i.e., alteration costs excluding the cost for asbestos abatement, roof replacement and site development) will be considered eligible for reimbursement as part of a PlanCon project. This policy does not change the calculations for determining the maximum formula amount for reimbursement.

REFERENCES:

Purdon's Statutes

24 P.S. §7-733
24 P.S. §25-2574
24 P.S. §25-2579

Department of Education Standards

[22 Pa. Code, Chapter 349](#)

CONTACT BUREAU/OFFICE:

Division of School Facilities
Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Management
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
Phone: (717) 787-5480