

What we evaluate:

School Site

Education and community needs

The school site is not just the location of the building, it is a vital part of the facilities and the educational program. Educational and community functions can easily be enhanced by or limited by the adequacy of the school site. It should be large enough to accommodate all instructional, instructionally-related, and support services areas. The school site should be conveniently located near the present and future population but not located near undesirable business or natural hazards. It should provide appropriate space for playgrounds, intramural, and athletic areas. and be well landscaped, taking into consideration the site's elevations, contours, and types of soil.



Plant Maintainability

Life of the building at reasonable costs

School districts have a responsibility to protect their investments. No investment is more important financially than school facilities. Buildings should be maintained as close to their newly constructed state as possible, but all building components have an expected life cycle. The expected life cycle is the average useful life years that a building component should last based on regular and preventive maintenance. With this in mind, school districts must understand that trying to use a component beyond its expected life is not always the most economical or efficient option. Often the last 25 percent of the life of a component can cost more to maintain than replacing the component with a new component which is typically new and improved.



Building Safety and Security

Well-being of students, staff, and visitors

Safety and security have become the most important responsibility of school officials. Students, staff, and visitors should reasonably expect to be protected when entering a school facility. Although school safety cannot always be assured, every effort must be made to achieve and maintain the highest possible level of safety and mitigate potential threats. School safety can relate to the site location, building design, selection of material, or poor operational practice. Safety and security not only protects the students, staff, and visitors but also helps to ensure uninterrupted operation of the educational program.



Educational Adequacy

Relationship between educational programs and physical structures

School facilities exist for the sole purpose of meeting the educational needs of the community and the school district while adhering to TEA space requirements. Educational adequacy is based on the relationship between the instructional program and the physical structures—the facilities. Facilities affect the behavior of students, staff, and the community. The environment provided should enhance the instructional program and not deter it. School districts face a difficult challenge in meeting these needs and requirements while dealing with aging facilities and budget constraints.



Structural and Mechanical Features

Design and specifications

Structural and mechanical features are all basic functions of a facility, but it is these features that determine the potential for future expansion and meet new facility requirements in education and technology.

One of the most crucial requirements to consider is energy efficiency. The building envelope is the first defense against rising energy costs. Providing energy-efficient buildings not only helps reduce energy consumption but also can be part of the school district's long-range energy plan required by the Texas Education Code § 44.902. Lighting should provide the necessary illumination level, minimize glare and provide the overall best visual comfort level as recommended by the Illumination Engineering Society. Instructional areas should have adequate access to electrical outlets to support the ever increasing media equipment. An adequate number of restrooms and drinking fountains should be provided and conveniently located. Another important factor to consider for newly constructed and renovated buildings is meeting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility guidelines.



Facilities Assessments

Environment for Education Impression of the school

A good physical environment aids learning. Therefore, educational facilities should make a lasting first impression. The environment, both inside and out, should be inviting to children and adults and conducive to learning. Schools should place emphasis on physical comfort, ease of movement, and aesthetic qualities to encourage use of the facilities even when they are not required to be there.



TASB OnSite Facilities Assessments can help your district in dealing with:

- Aging facilities
- Facility needs due to changing enrollment
- Long-range facility planning



How does your district measure up?

Questions?

Contact the OnSite staff at 800.580.8272, ext. 3205 or facilities@tasb.org.

For more information about OnSite environmental and facilities services, contact us at 800.580.8272, extension 4154, or go to onsite@tasb.org. For information about electricity and facilities, visit energy.tasb.org.



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