

— ISSUETRAK —

A CEFPI Brief on Educational Facility Issues

Topic: State Acreage Policies
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School Site Size — How many acres are necessary?

In recent years one of the most discussed topics regarding school construction is that of appropriate acreage for siting school facilities. This subject is not only a question that needs to be addressed for new schools, but for renovation and/or addition projects as well. Many factors need to be considered when answering this question of acreage. These include, but are not limited to the number of students; the grades to be housed; the educational programs and services that are planned; the site requirements including physical education programs, parking, forestation or reforestation, zoning and set-backs, storm water management, and community sports, leisure, and recreational events. Very often there are state, school district, and/or local government site size requirements, guidelines, or standards that also must be considered. These entities may have varying opinions, methodologies, and rationales for their school site size requirements, guidelines, or standards.

Although the Council of Educational Facility Planners (CEFPI) is not a “standards” setting organizations, the Council does publish guidelines on various topics regarding educational facility planning. Many states that do provide acreage and other design specifications have formulas that are similar to the CEFPI recommendations that were published in past editions of *The Guide for Planning Educational Facilities*. These recommendations are being carefully reviewed as the new edition of *The Guide for Planning Educational Facilities* is being prepared, due to be released in the Spring of 2004. Currently many states follow these site formulas:

Elementary Schools = 10 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students;
Junior High/Middle Schools = 20 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students;
Senior High Schools = 30 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students.

In this report, no attempt has been made to either evaluate the published documents or determine how a state implements the acreage formula. Additionally, the report does not identify local district or governmental policies that may vary from the figures listed for a specific state. Most states with oversight responsibilities do accept waivers and alternatives to the published requirements, guidelines or standards, and often differentiate between existing facilities and new construction. Some states have formulas that only apply to the maximum amount of state funding available and allow districts to locally fund acreage beyond the site size specified in the accompanying chart. In other cases a state might approve a site smaller than what is specified in the charts based upon the submission of a request for a waiver and a well-documented justification. For specific information regarding the school site size requirements, guidelines, or standards, please contact the State Department of Education or school building authority in your state. Please contact your local school district for additional information and policies affecting the size of a school site, in general or for a specific project. State documents that have been referenced may be accessible through the individual department of education websites.

With the assistance of Barbara Kent Lawrence, Ed.D., educational consultant, CEFPI staff collected this data from state facility reports, manuals and capital construction legislation, and verified it through direct contact with personnel from state educational agencies and practitioners. Dr. Kelvin Lee, Ed.D., Superintendent of Dry Creek Joint Elementary School, and Yale Stenzler, Ed.D., educational facilities consultant, also deserve recognition and thanks for their assistance in developing this project.

All information in the table was collected from state facility reports and manuals, and verified through direct contact with personnel from state educational agencies and practitioners. For additional information, details, and/or procedures regarding school site size requirements, guidelines, or standards in your state, please contact the State Department of Education or school building authority in your state. To recommend revisions and additions to the table, please contact CEFPI.

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State	Contact Info	Formulas for School Site Analysis	Comments	Document(s)
Alabama	School Architect & Facilities (334) 242-9731 http://www.alsde.edu/text/sections/section_detail.asp?section=86&menu=sections&footer=sections	Elementary School (K-8, and must not contain a grade above 8) Base of 5 acres plus one acre for every 100 students Middle School (4-9, but not including both grades 4 and 9) Base of 10 acres plus one acre for every 100 students Secondary School (5-12, but must contain a grade above 8) Base of 15 acres plus one acre for every 100 students for existing schools Base of 30 acres plus one acre for every 100 students for proposed schools	The state architect referred to the specifications as recommendations only.	Construction Requirements for County and Public Schools
Alaska	Department of Education & Early Development Facilities (907) 465-2785 http://www.eed.state.ak.us/facilities/	Elementary = 10 acres plus one acre for every 100 students Middle = 20 acres plus one acre for every 100 students High = 30 acres plus one acre for every 100 students K-12 = 20 acres plus one acre for every 100 students For very small schools: 4 acres = 10-25 students; 6 acres = 26-50 students; 8 acres = 50-99 students	No acreage requirements are regulated. Specifications are recommendations only, and are applied to the state share of funding.	Site Selection Criteria and Evaluation Handbook (1997)
Arizona	School Facilities Board (602) 542-6501 http://www.sfb.state.az.us/	Elementary = up to 8-18 acres Middle/Junior = up to 18-36 High School = up to 30-70	Acreage guidelines range based upon student capacity and serve for new construction only. Recommendations are not listed in the Rules and Policies.	Arizona School Facilities Board Rules and Policies
Arkansas	Department of Education (501) 682-4261 http://arkedu.state.ar.us/administrators/077.html	No acreage recommendations made		Arkansas Department of Education Rules and Regulations Governing the Minimum Schoolhouse Construction Standards
California	School Facilities Planning Division (916) 322-2470 http://www.cde.ca.gov/facilities/	Grades K-6 450 students = 9.6 acres 750 students = 13.8 acres 1200 students = 17.6 acres Grades 7-8 600 students = 17.4 acres (with track facilities) 900 students = 20.9 acres (with track facilities) 1200 students = 23.1 acres (with track facilities) Grades 9-12 1200 students = 33.5 acres 1800 students = 44.5 acres 2400 students = 52.7 acres	Alternative solutions to acreage recommendations are provided. If a school site is less than the recommended acreage required, the district shall demonstrate how the facilities will accommodate an adequate educational program, including physical education, as described in the district's adopted course of study.	1. Guide to School Site Analysis and Development, 2000 2. School Site Selection and Approval Guide 3. Small School Site Policy Memo (2001)
Colorado	Department of Education (303) 866-6600 http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_finance.htm	The state does not provide any recommendations for school facilities.	Jefferson County has developed comprehensive guidelines for their facilities, which do address acreage requirements.	
Connecticut	School Facilities Unit (860) 713-6490 http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dgm/sfu/index.htm	Elementary = 10 acres plus 1 acre for each 100 students* Middle = 15 acres plus 1 acre for each 100 students* High = 20 acres plus 1 acre for each 100 students* * of the projected enrollment (8 years from the application date)	Site allowances refers to the maximum amount the state will consider funding and does not restrict local districts to exceed the acreage allowance or obstruct the district to use a smaller site.	Regulations of the State Board of Education Concerning School Construction Grants
Delaware	Department of Education (302) 739-4601 http://facilitynet.doe.k12.de.us/sitenet/default.asp	Elementary = 10 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students of school capacity Middle/Junior High = 20 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students of school capacity High School = 30 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students of school capacity	Specifications are minimum recommendations only, but "there is probably no real substitute for sufficient size." Options to consider for sites that do not meet the minimum acreage recommendation are provided.	School Construction Technical Assistance Manual
Florida	Office of Educational Facilities (850) 245-0494 http://www.firn.edu/doe/edfacil	Guidelines provide detailed information about the site but do not address acreage guidelines.	Size specifications refer to the spaces in the building(s) and the number of spaces allowed according to enrollment.	State Requirements for Educational Facilities

Georgia	Facilities Services (404) 656-2454 http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/schools/facilities	Elementary = 5 acres plus 1 acre for each 100 students (min) Middle = 12 acres plus 1 acre for each 100 students (min) High = 20 acres plus 1 acre for each 100 students (min)	In developed areas, the site approval committee may make deviations from minimum acreage if the reduced acreage is considered appropriate. Although minimum acreages are established, large acreages are highly desirable.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General Criteria for Public School Construction 2. Square Footage Requirements for Use in Developing the Local Facilities Plans and State Capital Outlay Applications for Funding
Hawaii	Department of Education, Facilities (808) 733-4861 http://doe.k12.hi.us/	Elementary = 12 usable acres, approximate enrollment for 650 students Middle School = 18 usable acres, approximate enrollment for 1,100 students High School = 50 usable acres, approximate enrollment for 1,400-1,600 students	Nick Nichols from the State Department of Education provided information. Amounts are recommendations for an "ideal" site, and are considered guidelines. Each site and project is considered unique and exceptions to the recommendations are accepted.	Official design specification documents are currently being drafted.
Idaho	Department of Education (208) 332-6800 http://www.sde.state.id.us/fedpro/	Elementary = 5 acre minimum plus 1 acre per 100 students Junior High = 10 acres for up to 300 students = 15 acres for up to 400 students = 20 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students over 500 Senior High = 20 acres for up to 400 students = 25 acres for up to 800 students = 30 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students over 800	The State has pending litigation regarding equitable facilities; however, there is no movement to mandate educational specifications or provide more comprehensive design specifications. Published material is dated and projects do not need to adhere to guidelines or submit project plans to the State.	Faxed, (untitled) document received from state department of education.
Illinois	School Construction Program (217) 785-8779 http://www.isbe.state.il.us/construction/school.htm	Grades PK-6 = 5 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students (max) Grades 7-9 = 15 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students (max) Grades 9-12 = 20 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students (max)	Determination of the adequacy of the site's space in terms of number of students shall be based on the design capacity of the school building. The proposed site must contain usable space sufficient in size and of regular configuration so as to accommodate the school's on-site program as well as to accommodate ancillary functions that are better served on-site than off-site, such as parking, bus loading and unloading, casual student assembly and play, and pedestrian movement between different points on the site.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Title 71: Public Buildings, Facilities & Real Property 2. State, Local and Federal Financing for Illinois Public Schools
Indiana	State Board of Education (317) 232-0840 http://www.board-of-education.state.in.us/constguide.html	Elementary = 7 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students (max) Middle/Junior High = 15 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students (min) High = 20 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students.		Indiana State Board of Education School Facility Guidelines
Iowa	Iowa Department of Education (515) 281-5294 http://www.state.ia.us/educate/	The state does not provide any recommendations for school facilities.		
Kansas	Department of Education, Facilities (785) 296-2627 http://www.ksbe.state.ks.us/	The state does not provide any recommendations for school facilities.	Plans must be submitted to the State for review of fire and life safety code compliance.	
Kentucky	Division of Facilities Management (502) 564-4326 http://www.kde.state.ky.us/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Facilities/default.htm	Elementary = 5 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students (min) Middle/Junior/High = 10 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students (min)	Any deviation from regulations shall be made only after a site inspection and investigation of all other circumstances, including a certification of support by the local education agency and approval by the chief state school officer.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District Facility Planning Process 2. Capital Construction Funding 3. Guidelines of Best Practices for School Building Projects
Louisiana	Department of Education (877) 453-2721 http://www.doe.state.la.us/DOE/asps/home.asp	No acreage recommendations made.		

Maine	Department of Education (207) 624-6883 http://www.state.me.us/education/const/homepage.htm	Elementary 5 useable acres + 1 for every 100 students (min) 20 useable acres + 1 for every 100 students (max) Middle 10 useable acres + 1 for every 100 students (min) 25 useable acres + 1 for every 100 students (max) High 15 useable acres + 1 for every 100 students (min) 30 useable acres + 1 for every 100 students (max)	School building sites can deviate from the requirements with State approval and when the District can demonstrate that all programs can be accommodated, all health and safety issues can be resolved, and the site can achieve compliance with appropriate codes.	1. ABC's of School Site Selection 2. Chapter 61: Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects (2003)
Maryland	Public School Construction Program (410) 767-0610 http://www.pscp.state.md.us	No acreage recommendations made.		Public School Construction Program Administrative Procedures Guide.
Massachusetts	Department of Education (781) 338-6500 http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/sbuilding/	No acreage recommendations provided.	The site selected should be chosen on the basis that it would meet the educational need and minimize any possible adverse educational, environmental, social, or economical impact upon the community. The guidelines further explain that "The site shall be so located as to serve efficiently and safely the school population it is intended to serve, and shall be of sufficient size to accommodate the building and planned future additions."	Education Laws and Regulations
Michigan	Department of Education (517) 335-0521 http://www.michigan.gov/mde	The state does not provide any recommendations for school facilities.		
Minnesota	Minnesota Department of Education, Facilities and Organization (651) 582-8828 http://education.state.mn.us/stellent/groups/public/documents/translatedcontent/pub_intro_finance_facil.jsp	Elementary School = 10-15 acres plus * K-8 or Middle Level School = 25-35 acres plus * K-12 School or Small High School = 35-40 acres plus * Large High School (+2000 students) = 60 acres plus * Campus (two or more schools) = Combine site sizes plus * *All Schools = 1 additional acre for each 100 students of estimated student enrollment and community use/partnership program capacity, including possible additions.	Guidelines provide alternatives and make allowances for urban and rural schools.	Guide for Planning School Construction Projects in Minnesota
Mississippi	Division of Safe and Orderly Schools (601) 359-1028 http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/lead/osos/	Elementary = 5 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students enrolled (minimum) High = 15 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students enrolled (minimum)	Standards are for new construction only. Waivers are provided for special circumstances of a unique situation.	1. Rules and Regulations of the State Public School Building Fund 2. Evaluation of Proposed New School Site 3. Construction Standards and Life Safety Codes
Missouri	School Improvement Program (573) 526-6949 http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divadm/govern/index.html	Elementary Schools = 10 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students Middle/Junior High Schools = 20 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students High Schools = 30 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students	The State has no oversight of capital construction; specifications are guidelines.	1. School Improvement Program: Standards and Indicators 2. School Facility Guidelines: Elementary School Buildings, Middle/Junior High School Buildings, High School Buildings 3. Guidelines for Bond Issues
Montana	Office of Public Instruction (406) 444-3095 http://www.opi.state.mt.us/index.html	The state does not provide any recommendations for school facilities.		
Nebraska	Department of Education (402) 471-2295 http://www.nde.state.ne.us/	The state does not provide any recommendations for school facilities.		
Nevada	Department of Education (775) 687-9200 http://www.nde.state.nv.us/	The state does not provide any recommendations for school facilities.		
New Hampshire	Department of Education (603) 271-3494 http://www.ed.state.nh.us/	Elementary = 5 usable acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students Middle = 10 usable acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students High School = 15 usable acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students	Districts must meet the minimum standard for funding; however waivers are granted frequently, particularly in urban areas.	Ed Murdough of the State Department of Education provided verbal confirmation.

New Jersey	Department of Education (609) 984-2738 http://www.state.nj.us/njded/facilities/	No acreage requirements and/or guidelines.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New Jersey's Facilities Construction & Renovation Program 2. Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act 3. Educational Facilities, N.J.A.C. 6A:26, Subchapter 7
New Mexico	Department of Education (505) 827-6560 http://www.sde.state.nm.us/divisions/finance/index.html	No acreage requirements and/or guidelines.	Statute reads, " A school site shall be of sufficient size to accommodate safe access, parking, drainage and security and be of an area large enough to accommodate a school site that complies with the net classroom square footage requirement established for the number of students at the facility. Additionally, the site shall be provided with an adequate source of water and appropriate means of effluent disposal."	Public School Capital Outlay Council, Adequacy Standards: Title 6, ch. 27, Part 60, Section 6.27.30.10
New York	Facilities, Management and Information Services (518) 474-3906 http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/facplan/	Elementary = 3 acres plus 1 additional acre for every 100 students Secondary = 10 acres plus 1 additional acre for every 100 students	Recommendations are for the state of New York and do not apply to New York City. Site standards are generally not applied when the capital construction project consists only of reconstruction or alterations. Variances may be granted upon written request and supported by documentation.	Manual of Planning Standards
North Carolina	School Planning (919) 807-3554 http://www.schoolclearinghouse.org/	K-6 = 10 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students 5-8 = 15 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students 9-12 = 30 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students	Recommended acreage may not be attainable in urban areas; innovative solutions for parking, physical education facilities and other site amenities may be required.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facility Guidelines 2. Typical Space Profile 3. The School Site Planner 4. Making Current Trends in School Design Feasible
North Dakota	Department of Public Instruction (701) 328-2260 http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/	No acreage requirements and/or guidelines.	Material is dated and projects do not need to adhere to guidelines.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elementary School Spaces 2. Secondary School Spaces
Ohio	Ohio School Facility Commission (614) 466-6290 http://www.osfc.state.oh.us/	Elementary = 10 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students Middle = 20 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students High = 35 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students Combination Schools: K-12 School = 40 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students K-8 School = 20 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students 6-12 School = 35 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students	Deviations from the site size may be required because of extenuating circumstances. Deviations from the site size requirements must be approved by the Ohio School Facilities Commission. Urban site issues are addressed extensively and alternative design specifications are provided.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ohio School Design Manual 2. Ohio School Design Manual, Commentary
Oklahoma	Department of Education (405) 521-3812 http://sde.state.ok.us/home/defaultie.html	Elementary Schools = 10 acres plus 1 additional acre for every 100 students Middle School/Junior High Schools = 20 acres plus 1 additional acre for every 100 students High Schools = 30 acres plus 1 additional acre for every 100 students	For school sites in densely populated areas and in other locations where land costs are extremely high, the recommended number of acres may prove to be unrealistic. For school sites immediately adjacent to park and recreation lands, the number of acres that would actually be school owned may be modified. Cooperation with local park authorities and other governmental agencies is encouraged, resulting in joint use of common areas or facilities.	Planning for Education: Space Guidelines for Planning Educational Facilities (1998)
Oregon	Department of Education (503) 378-3569 http://www.ode.state.or.us/	No acreage requirements or facility design guidelines.		

Pennsylvania	Department of Education, Facilities and Construction (717) 787-5480 http://www.pde.state.pa.us/constr_facil/site/default.asp	Elementary Schools = 10 acres plus 1 additional acre for every 100 students Middle School/Junior High Schools = 20 acres plus 1 additional acre for every 100 students Secondary/Comprehensive Schools = 35 acres plus 1 additional acre for every 100 students	These acreage allowances are used solely in determining the level of state funding for site acquisition; there are no minimum or maximum acreage requirements actually mandated by state law or regulation for public schools.	1. School Construction Reimbursement Criteria 2. Reimbursements for School Construction Bond Issues
Rhode Island	Department of Education, Construction Aid (401) 222-4600 http://www.ridoe.net/funding/Default.htm	Elementary = 10 acres plus 1 additional acre for every 100 students Middle School/Junior High = 20 acres plus 1 additional acre for every 100 students High = 30 acres plus 1 additional acre for every 100 students	Sites should be chosen on the basis that it will meet the educational need and minimize and possible adverse educational, environmental, social or economic impact upon the community. Sites should be so located as to serve efficiently and safely the school population it is intended to serve and be of sufficient size to accommodate the building and planned future additions as well as outdoor educational facilities, parking, bus turnarounds, etc. Sites should be located whenever possible in proximity to other community facilities and resources which would enhance the proposed educational program.	Guidelines & Planning Information for School Construction
South Carolina	Office of School Facilities (803) 253-4048 http://www.myscschools.com/offices/sf/	Acreage requirements repealed July 2003.	State must approve the acquisition of property before purchase.	South Carolina School Facilities Planning and Construction Guide.
South Dakota	Department of Education (605) 773-3248 http://www.state.sd.us/deca/data/finance.htm	The state does not provide any recommendations for school facilities.		
Tennessee	Department of Education (615) 532-4709 http://www.state.tn.us/education/	The state does not provide any recommendations for school facilities.		
Texas	Texas Education Agency (512) 463-9238 http://www.tea.state.tx.us/school.finance/facilities/	No acreage requirements and/or guidelines.	Classroom space is defined but variances are allowed if the educational program and services of the facility require non-traditional space.	1. The TEA School Facilities Standards 2. §61.1033. School Facilities Standards for Construction before January 1, 2004.
Utah	Office of Education (801) 538-7500 http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us	K-6 School = 10 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students Middle/Junior = 20 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students High School = 30 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students	Although increasing rapidly in cost, land is still one of the least expensive education resources provided for schools... the size of a site is more important than location. Inadequate site size is a major factor in the obsolescence of educational facilities.	School Building: Construction & Inspection Resource Manual
Vermont	Department of Education (802) 822-3111 http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_construction.html	No acreage requirements and/or guidelines.	The proposed site must be adequate for: the educational programs the school board plans to conduct now and in the future; the anticipated community uses; the space needed for the planned construction; and the growth potential of the district.	1. School Construction Planning Guide 2. State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices: School Buildings and Sites 3. School Buildings & Sites, Building Projects Eligible for State Aid
Virginia	Department of Education, Facility Services (804) 225-2035 http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Finance/Facilities/	Elementary = 4 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students Middle/High Schools = 10 acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students	Recommendations are minimums and local districts may set higher standards. Urban areas may seek permission to use smaller sites.	Vijay Ramnarain of the Facilities Office provided verbal confirmation of information.

<p>Washington</p>	<p>Office of Public Instruction (360) 725-5631 http://www.k12.wa.us/facilities/</p>	<p>The minimum acreage of the site should be 5 usable acres and 1 additional acre for each 100 students or portion thereof of projected maximum enrollment plus an additional 5 acres if the school contains any grade above the sixth.</p>	<p>The site is of sufficient size to meet the needs of the facility. A district considering the use of a site that is less than the recommended minimum usable acreage should assure that: health and safety of students will not be in jeopardy; the internal spaces within the proposed facility will be adequate for the proposed educational program; the neighborhood in which the school facility is or will be situated will not be detrimentally impacted by lack of parking for students, staff, and public.</p>	<p>School Facilities Manual</p>
<p>West Virginia</p>	<p>School Building Authority (304) 558-2541 http://www.state.wv.us/wvsba/</p>	<p>Early Childhood/Primary (K-4) 5 usable acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students over 240 Middle/Junior High (5-9) 11 usable acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students over 600 Adolescent/High School (9-12) 15 usable acres plus 1 acre for every 100 students over 800</p>	<p>Where the nature of the neighborhood is urban, the school site shall also be urban in scale. Where the terrain limits the land available, this factor shall be considered. The WV BOE must approve all sites not meeting the minimum standards.</p>	<p>Guidelines & Procedures of the School Building Authority of West Virginia</p>
<p>Wisconsin</p>	<p>Department of Public Instruction (608) 266-7475 http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/index.html</p>	<p>No acreage requirements and/or guidelines.</p>		
<p>Wyoming</p>	<p>Department of Education (307) 777-6198 http://www.k12.wy.us/</p>	<p>Elementary Schools = 4 acres plus 1 additional acre for each 100 students (min) Middle/Junior High Schools = 10 acres plus 1 additional acre for each 100 students (min) Senior High Schools = 20 acres for enrollments up to 400 students = 25 acres for enrollments up to 800 students = 30 acres in ultimate projected enrollments</p>	<p>If a district possesses a unique site situation not applicable to the standards, it may apply for a variance. Many older schools have sites that fall far below the minimum requirements. In those cases, districts shall refrain from construction that will increase the square footage of any school building situated on a site that is less than 50% of the currently recommended site sizes.</p>	<p>Chapter 17: Site Selection & School Construction</p>