

School Facility Best Practices (see also topics Ky School Facility Newsletter)

In 1998, the Exemplary School Facility Committee and the Office of Management Assistance in accordance with direction from the Kentucky State Board of Education created Best Practice Guidelines for Schools in Kentucky. These guidelines were used each year for a committee of Kentucky school facility experts to assess the quality of volunteer school facility programs. If Best Practices were found, districts were awarded and recognized as being exemplary. As part of the award, the exemplary districts agreed to partner with a district requesting assistance to improve their program. Best Practices were as follow:

1. Exemplary districts must demonstrate in their actions, beliefs and policies, that their facility program is fully supported by district leadership (including the superintendent and the local board of education). District leaders make an intentional connection between facilities and student performance, and are committed to excellence and innovation.
2. Exemplary districts must demonstrate a capacity for quality long range capital planning and have in place current appropriate capital construction priorities that match the facility needs of the district. Plans and facilities support a modern educational program including exemplary and ubiquitous technology, and consider cost of delivery of services, transportation, demographics, and condition of facilities for an adequate and equitable education. School centers and classrooms are sized and utilized appropriately for quality of education and cost of delivery of services.
3. Exemplary districts have 90% of facilities in good to new condition (1, 2, or 3 on the 1 new, to 5 poor, regulatory scale), and are staggered and financially sustainable on 30 year life cycles. Appropriate capital construction revenue streams are in place to support short and long term capital needs. All facilities are 100% handicapped accessible, have exemplary technology access for all students, and no portable classrooms in service.
4. Exemplary districts have an effective preventative maintenance plan in place. Maintenance staffing is appropriate (about 1 FTE per major building) with all trades represented, or adequate resources are provided to outsource an effective program. If maintenance is not outsourced, exemplary districts provide a local budget of 3 to 7% of the general fund (not including dedicated personnel or utilities) for operations and maintenance. There is an effective, established electronic work order system, and appropriate local control of maintenance equipment and inventory that support an effective program.

5. Exemplary districts have effective Safe School Plans and maintain a safe and healthy environment for students and staff. Plans include appropriate leadership training, student and staff drills and emergency facility and transportation planning for storms, fires, possible flooding, and other major disasters.
6. Exemplary districts have clean and healthy buildings with appropriate custodial staffing of 1 FTE per 20,000 square feet of facility.
7. Exemplary districts have an effective energy management program.
8. Exemplary districts demonstrate an ongoing commitment to facility leadership development at all levels, with effective and adequate professional development for staff inside and outside the facility area.
9. School Districts shall have an effective school safety program applying all required and recommended attributes from the Kentucky Center for School Safety.
10. School Districts shall have and maintain a robust education technology system and leadership capacity for student learning.

(See also school topics, Kentucky School Facility Newsletter Volume 2 issue 1, May 2012 for resources and principles to develop best practice school facility programs.)