

EFF. 9/1/92 - 8/31/94

Rules Adopted by the State Board of Education

3. 19 TAC §§61.101-61.104, School Facilities Standards

These rules govern standards for school facilities. Section 61.101 establishes the effective date for application of the rules as September 1, 1992. Standards address room size, construction quality, educational adequacy, and long-range planning. A question and answer document to assist school districts with interpretation of the rules will follow this transmittal. Authority for this action is the Texas Education Code, §16.402.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE RULE: The rule requires the commissioner to develop recommendations addressing educational adequacy and the long-range planning process. Recommendations are being developed and will be sent to school districts at a later date.

STAFF CONTACT: Questions about these rules should be directed to the Division of State Funding and School Facilities at (512) 463-9238.

II. REQUIRED SCHOOL FACILITIES STANDARDS

§61.101 Applicability

Statutory Citation

Texas Education Code §16.402: Standards

"The State Board of Education shall establish standards for adequacy of school facilities. The standards shall include requirements related to space, educational adequacy, and construction quality."

Rule

- (a) Definitions. The following words and terms, when used in this subchapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.
 - (1) Final design documents - These documents shall include all of the following:
 - (A) Evaluation of owner's program, schedule, and construction budget;
 - (B) The development of alternate approaches to design and construction;
 - (C) Preparation of drawings illustrating scale, size, and relationship of project components; and
 - (D) A preliminary estimate of construction cost based on current area, volume, or other unit costs.
 - (2) Instructional space - General classrooms and specialized classrooms and major support areas.
 - (3) Library - Library will include the following minimum requirements:
 - (A) reading room;
 - (B) stack area; and
 - (C) necessary service areas.

- (4) Renovations - At least 50% of the building's gross area is within the limits of the work. Sections 16.101, 16.102, and 16.104 of this undesignated head (relating to School Facilities Standards) shall apply to renovation projects. All renovations shall comply with applicable building codes.
 - (5) Square feet per pupil - The net interior space of a room divided by the maximum number of pupils to be housed in that room during a single class period.
 - (6) Square foot per room measurements - Actual sizes for a room that will house 22 students at the elementary level and 25 students at the middle or high school level. Net room square footage is inclusive of exposed storage space, such as cabinets or shelving, but exclusive of hallway space. Storage space such as closets or preparation offices is not included in the room square footage.
- (b) Documents required by effective date. These requirements shall apply to projects for new construction or major renovations for which final design documents have not been approved by a school board prior to September 1, 1992.
 - (c) All other requirements applicable. School districts shall meet all requirements contained in §§61.101-61.104 of this undesignated head .
 - (d) Certification of design and construction.
 - (1) In this section, the word "certify" indicates that the architect/engineer has reviewed the standards and used the best professional judgment and reasonable care consistent with the practice of architecture or engineering in the State of Texas in executing the construction documents. The architect/engineer also certifies that these documents conform with all requirements contained in §§61.101, 61.102, and 61.104 of this undesignated head, except as indicated on the certification.
 - (2) The school district shall give notice and obligate the architect/engineer to provide the required certification. The architect's/engineer's signature and seal on the construction documents shall certify compliance.
 - (3) To ensure that buildings have been designed and constructed according to requirements of this title, each of the involved parties must execute responsibilities as follows.

- (A) The school district shall provide the architect/engineer with enrollment projections, educational specifications, building code specifications, and educational objectives for the facility. The district shall provide this information to the architect/engineer as specified by the commissioner of education.
- (B) The architect/engineer, shall perform a code search under applicable regulations that may influence the project, and shall certify that the design has been researched before it is final.
- (C) The architect/engineer shall also certify that the building has been designed according to the criteria established in §§61.101, 61.102, and 61.104 of this undesignated head, based on enrollment information, educational specifications, and building code specifications as provided by the district.
- (D) The building contractor or construction manager shall certify that the facility has been constructed according to the construction documents as specified in subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

B. §61.102 Space, Minimum Square Foot Requirements

- (a) A school district, if required by the district educational specification or educational program, is required to provide instructional space as indicated in subsection (b) of this section.
- (b) For each type of instructional space, a district may satisfy the requirements of the rule by using either the standard for the minimum square feet per pupil or the standard for square feet per room, as appropriate. Room size requirements are based on rooms that will house 22 students at the elementary level and 25 students at the middle or high school level.
 - (1) General Classrooms.
 - (A) Classrooms for prekindergarten through first grade shall have a minimum of 36 square feet per pupil or 800 square feet per room.

(B) Classrooms at the elementary school level shall have a minimum of 30 square feet per pupil or 700 square feet per room.

(C) Classrooms at the secondary school level shall have a minimum of 28 square feet per pupil or 700 square feet per room.

(2) Specialized Classrooms.

(A) Computer laboratories shall have a minimum of 41 square feet per pupil or 900 square feet per room at the elementary school level; and 36 square feet per pupil or 900 square feet per room at the secondary school level.

(B) Science lecture/lab shall have a minimum of 41 square feet per pupil or 900 square feet per room at the elementary school level; 50 square feet per pupil or 1,000 square feet per room at the middle school level; and 50 square feet per pupil or 1,200 square feet per room at the high school level.

(3) Major Support Areas

(A) Primary gymnasiums or physical education space, if required by the district's educational program, shall have a minimum of 3,000 square feet at the elementary school level; 4,800 square feet at the middle school level; and 7,500 square feet at the high school level.

(B) Libraries shall have a minimum of 3.0 square feet times the planned student capacity of the school. The minimum size of any elementary school library shall be 1,400 square feet. The minimum size of any middle school library shall be 2,100 square feet, and the minimum high school library shall be 2,800 square feet.

C. §61.103 Educational Adequacy

(a) The commissioner of education shall establish recommendations concerning the best practice for the development of educational specifications to ensure the educational adequacy of all public school facilities.

- (b) Recommendations from the commissioner shall include a long-range planning process for school facilities as part of the overall planning process to ensure that all facilities meet the needs of the educational program.

D. §61.104 Construction Quality

- (a) Districts with Existing Codes

School districts located in an area with an adopted building code shall meet their local building codes (including fire and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing codes). School districts located in areas where there is already a locally adopted building code do not have to seek additional plan review of their school facilities projects other than what is required in the local building code.

- (b) Districts with No Existing Codes

School districts located in areas where there is no locally adopted building code shall adopt and use the latest edition of either the Uniform Building Code or Standard (Southern) Building Code (and related fire and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing codes). A third-party, qualified, independent code review shall be conducted to ensure that plans conform with either the Uniform Building Code or the Standard Building Code (and related fire and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing codes) before the start of construction. This plan review must be conducted by an independent certified building code consultant, architect, or engineer not employed by the design architect/engineer who will certify building code compliance.

- (c) School districts shall comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other local, state and federal requirements as may be applicable.