

Chapter 61. School Districts

Subchapter CC. Commissioner's Rules Concerning School Facilities

§61.1033. School Facilities Standards for Construction before January 1, 2004.

- (a) Definitions and procedures. The following words, terms, and procedures, when used in this section, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.
- (1) Educational program--A written document that includes the following information:
 - (A) a summary of the school district's educational philosophy, mission, and goals; and
 - (B) a description of the general nature of the district's instructional program in accordance with §74.1 of this title (relating to Essential and Knowledge and Skills).
 - (2) Educational specifications--Educational specifications for a proposed new school facility or major space renovation include a description of the proposed project, expressing the range of issues and alternatives. The following information should be included in the educational specifications:
 - (A) the instructional programs, grade configuration, and type of facility;
 - (B) number of students;
 - (C) a list of any specialized classrooms or major support areas, noninstructional support areas, or external activity spaces;
 - (D) estimated size of facility;
 - (E) estimated budget for the facility project;
 - (F) school administrative organization; and
 - (G) hours of operation that include the instructional day, extracurricular activities, and any public access or use.
 - (3) Instructional space--General classrooms, specialized classrooms, and major support areas.
 - (4) Library--Library will include the following minimum requirements:
 - (A) reading room;
 - (B) stack area; and
 - (C) necessary service areas.
 - (5) Major space renovations--At least 50% of the gross area of the facility's instructional space is within the limits of the work. Other renovations associated with repair or replacement of architectural interior or exterior finishes; fixtures; equipment; and electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems are not subject to the requirements of subsections (d) and (e) of this section, but shall comply with applicable building codes as required by subsection (f) of this section.
 - (6) 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.
 - (7) Square feet per room measurements--The net square footage of a room that will house 22 students at the elementary level and 25 students at the middle or high school level. The net square footage of a room includes exposed storage space, such as cabinets or shelving, but does not include hallway space or storage space, such as closets or preparation offices.
- (b) Implementation date. The requirements for school facility standards shall apply to projects for new construction or major space renovations approved by a school district board of trustees after September 1, 1998, and before January 1, 2004.

- (c) Certification of design and construction.
- (1) In this section, the word "certify" indicates that the architect or engineer has reviewed the standards contained in this chapter 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 or engineer also certifies that these documents conform to the provisions of this section, except as indicated on the certification.
 - (2) The school district shall notify and obligate the architect or engineer to provide the required certification. The architect's or engineer's signature and seal on the construction documents shall certify compliance.
 - (3) To ensure that facilities have been designed and constructed according to the provisions of this section, each of the involved parties shall execute responsibilities as follows.
 - (A) The school district shall provide the architect or engineer the long-range school facility plan and/or educational specifications approved by the board of trustees as required by this subchapter, and building code specifications for the facility.
 - (B) The architect or engineer shall perform a building 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 or engineer shall also certify that the facility has been designed according to the provisions of this section, based on the long-range school facility plan and/or educational specifications, building code specifications, and all documented changes to the construction documents provided by the district.
 - (D) The building contractor or construction manager shall certify that the facility has been constructed in general accordance with the construction documents specified in subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.
 - (E) When construction is completed, the school district shall certify that the facility conforms to the design requirements specified in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph.
- (d) Space, minimum square foot requirements.
- (1) A school district shall provide instructional space if required by the district educational specifications described in subsection (e) of this section.
 - (2) For each type of instructional space, a district may satisfy the requirements of this section by using, as appropriate, either the standard for the minimum square feet per pupil or for square feet per room specified in paragraphs (1)-(3) of this subsection. 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.
 - (A) General classrooms.
 - (i) Classrooms for prekindergarten-Grade 1 shall have a minimum of 36 square feet per pupil or 800 square feet per room.
 - (ii) Classrooms at the elementary school level shall have a minimum of 30 square feet per pupil or 700 square feet per room.
 - (iii) Classrooms at the secondary school level shall have a minimum of 28 square feet per pupil or 700 square feet per room.
 - (B) Specialized classrooms.
 - (i) 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.

- (ii) 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. A science lecture/lab is a classroom where both lecture and lab work occur in the same room and during the same class period.
- (C) Major support areas.
 - (i) 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.
 - (ii) 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. The minimum size of any high school library shall be 2,800 square feet.
- (3) Other space requirements should be developed from school district design criteria as required to meet educational program needs.
- (e) Educational adequacy. A proposed new school facility or major space renovation of an existing school facility meets the conditions of educational adequacy if the design of the proposed project is based on the requirements of the school district's educational program and the student population that it serves.
- (f) Construction quality.
 - (1) Districts with existing building codes. A school district located in an area that has adopted local building codes shall comply with those codes (including fire and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing codes). The school district is not required to seek additional plan review of school facilities projects other than what is required by the local building authority.
 - (2) Districts without existing building codes. A school district located in an area that has not adopted local building codes shall adopt and use the latest edition of either the Uniform Building Code or Standard (Southern) Building Code (and related fire, mechanical, and plumbing codes); and the National Electric Code. A qualified, independent third party, not employed by the design architect or engineer, shall review the plans and specifications for compliance with the requirements of the adopted building code. The plan review shall examine compliance conditions for emergency egress, fire protection, structural integrity, life safety, plumbing, and mechanical and electrical design. The review shall be conducted before bidding and must be conducted by a certified building code consultant. Associated fees shall be the responsibility of the school district. The reviewer shall prepare a summary list of any conditions not in conformance with the provisions of the adopted building code and is required to send a copy to the school district, design architect, or engineer. The design architect or engineer shall revise the plans and specifications as necessary and certify code compliance to the district. Any disputes shall be a matter for contract resolution.
 - (3) Other provisions. School districts shall comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title I and Title II) and other local, state, and federal requirements as applicable.

Statutory Authority: The provisions of this §61.1033 issued under the Texas Education Code, §46.008, as added by House Bill 4, 75th Texas Legislature, 1997.

Source: The provisions of this §61.1033 adopted to be effective September 1, 1998, 23 TexReg 7221; amended to be effective June 9, 2003, 28 TexReg 4420.