

The Guide to Development of Long-Range Facilities Master Plans

Revised Guidance on School Facilities Master Planning (10/2026)

Dear County and District Superintendents and Facilities Leaders:

The California Department of Education (CDE) is committed to advancing high-quality educational opportunities for all PK–12 students across the state. Safe, healthy, accessible, and well-maintained school facilities support teaching and learning and help ensure that students have equitable opportunities to succeed.

California's school communities face different—and sometimes overlapping—facilities challenges. Some must accommodate enrollment growth and new housing, while others must respond to declining enrollment and underutilized campuses. Aging buildings and infrastructure require continued investment, even where student enrollment is decreasing. Changing educational programs, technology, and climate conditions create additional demands on facilities and limited resources.

Facilities master planning is a critical tool for ensuring that school environments continue to meet the evolving needs of students, educators, and communities. A well-developed facilities master plan (FMP) helps local educational agencies (LEAs) assess existing conditions, anticipate enrollment and program needs, evaluate alternatives, and prioritize investments over time.

Prudent facilities planning is essential to making the right investments in the places where Californians learn. An FMP provides a foundation for deciding when to maintain, modernize, expand, replace, or repurpose facilities—and for explaining those decisions to the communities they serve. Considering both initial costs and ongoing maintenance and operating needs helps protect public investments for future generations.

To support this work, the CDE is pleased to provide this updated facilities master planning guidance as a non-regulatory resource for LEAs. Although Proposition 2 established five-year facilities master plan requirements for school districts participating in the School Facility Program, the broader purpose of this guidance is to strengthen local planning practices, whether or not state funding is being pursued.

This document outlines the key components of an effective FMP and addresses specialized educational programs, community engagement, and long-term considerations such as accessibility, indoor air quality, outdoor learning, and climate resilience. It is intended to be flexible and adaptable to local conditions and planning capacity, including the needs of small and rural districts. The CDE does not review, approve, or enforce FMPs; school districts should consult the Office of Public School Construction for current funding-related requirements.

Planning places where California learns is an enduring responsibility. Through thoughtful planning, meaningful community engagement, and regular reassessment, we can preserve the value of existing facilities while preparing learning environments for the students and communities of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

J. Juan Mireles | Director

School Facilities and Transportation Services Division
California Department of Education

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Purpose of the Guidance

This document is designed to support California local educational agencies (LEAs) in the development of comprehensive, thoughtful facilities master plans (FMPs). A well-prepared FMP can serve as a valuable strategic tool for assessing facility conditions, projecting future needs, and aligning capital improvements with the LEA's educational goals. While some elements of an FMP are now required for certain state funding applications, the primary purpose of this guidance is to assist LEAs in planning facilities effectively, regardless of whether funding is being pursued. Through thoughtful long-

range planning, FMPs can help create safe, healthy, adaptable, and sustainable learning environments that support both current and future educational needs. The California Department of Education (CDE) offers this document as a non-regulatory resource for LEAs that are new to master planning or looking to strengthen their existing practices.

What is a Facilities Master Plan?

An FMP is a long-range planning document that provides a comprehensive overview of LEA facilities and outlines a roadmap for future improvements. It typically covers a period of ten or more years and incorporates data on enrollment trends, facility conditions, programmatic needs, and capital priorities. An effective FMP helps LEAs make informed decisions about how, when, and where to invest in school facilities, ensuring that physical environments support high-quality teaching and learning. The plan should be grounded in the LEA's educational vision and developed through a collaborative and transparent process with stakeholders.

In addition to supporting capital planning and facility management, FMPs can serve as important tools for advancing educational goals, student health, and improving long-term climate resilience. LEAs are encouraged to consider how school facilities influence student well-being, instructional delivery, safety, and continuity during environmental or operational disruptions.

Summary of Proposition 2 Requirements

Assembly Bill 247 (2023), known as Proposition 2, introduced new requirements for school districts applying for the California School Facility Program (SFP) funding. Effective October 31, 2024, LEAs must submit a five-year FMP to the California Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) as a condition of funding.

While this CDE guidance document is not intended to interpret or enforce those requirements, LEAs may find it helpful to be aware of the elements identified in statute. [Education Code Section 17070.54\(c\)](#), outlines the minimum components that must be included in these plans when submitted for SFP funding purposes.

LEAs should refer directly to [OPSC's Five-Year School Facilities Master Plans](#) resources and [OPSC's School Facility Program Guidelines for the Five-Year School Facilities Master Plan](#) which includes instructions for specific requirements related to funding applications.

Please see appendix A, *Facilities Master Plan Elements Vs. Proposition 2 Requirements*, for a detailed chart that provides a summary of FMP elements and what is required for FMPs under Proposition 2.

The Role of the California Department of Education vs. the Office of Public School Construction

The CDE and OPSC play distinct roles in the realm of school facilities. The CDE is responsible for reviewing school site and plan approvals under the *California Code of Regulations* Title 5 (5 CCR). OPSC, a part of the California Department of General Services (DGS), administers the SFP and manages funding applications and approvals.

This guidance is provided by the CDE solely to support LEAs in developing their own FMPs. The CDE does not review, approve, or enforce FMPs, and submission of an FMP to OPSC is not routed through the CDE. This document is not regulatory and should not be interpreted as establishing requirements or criteria for funding eligibility.

How to Use This Document

This document is organized around the major components of a typical FMP. Each section offers general guidance, common planning practices, and key considerations that may support effective decision-making. Additional required elements and helpful resources can be found under appendix B and the Facilities Master Planning Resources section of this guide. While some sections highlight elements that are also required under Proposition 2, the primary goal is to help LEAs approach facilities master planning in a structured, thoughtful, and inclusive manner. LEAs are encouraged to adapt the recommendations in this guidance to suit their local context, available resources, and planning objectives.

Disclaimer

This guidance is intended to provide general information and best practices to assist local educational agencies in developing facilities master plans. It is not binding and does not establish regulatory requirements. LEAs pursuing SFP funding should refer to [Education Code Section 17070.54\(c\)](#) and consult OPSC for current eligibility and submission requirements.

This document does not constitute legal advice. LEAs are encouraged to consult with legal counsel or appropriate agencies, as needed, to ensure compliance with applicable statutes and regulations.

Chapter 1: Facilities Master Planning Process

Initiating the Process

Launching a master planning effort for a school district can be a complex but critically important process to ensure that students receive a high-quality education in safe, organized, and effective learning environments. A long-range facilities master plan (FMP) helps to align facilities, enrollment needs, educational goals, and community needs over the long term. A well-structured approach to initiate a district's long-range

plan ensures transparency, stakeholder buy-in, and ultimately creates the safe learning environments essential for student success.

Below is a step-by-step guide to launch a master planning effort, including setting the scope, timeline, and budget for the FMP.

1. Establish the district's purpose and vision.

- Align school facilities and infrastructure with the district's mission.
- Address current and future facility needs considering enrollment growth/decline, aging facilities, technology integration, equity, accessibility, etc.
- Collaborate with key district stakeholders to draft the vision statement for the master plan.

2. Define the scope.

There are key topics that the district may want to consider when defining the scope for their master plan.

- Current facilities conditions
- Redistricting, attendance boundary changes
- Student demographics
- Curriculum, including infrastructure for technology
- Programs that may require specific facility features
- Accessibility upgrades needed for special education
- New construction, modernization, routine maintenance
- School closures

3. Develop a timeline.

A timeline for master planning may vary based on the size of the district and can sometimes range from 6-18 months for larger districts. The phases of the timeline to be considered include, but are not limited to the following:

- Initiation of planning: Organize a master planning committee, hire consultants.

- Facilities assessment and data review: Include enrollment forecasts, facilities condition assessments, demographic study, capacity analysis, and routine maintenance collaboration.
- Community engagement: Facilitate town hall meetings, website publications, advertisements, workshops, and surveys.
- Final development: Confirm the district's scope and expectations along with the budget estimates required for the completion of the master plan.
- Approval and adoption: Presentation to the board and adoption of the master plan.

Notes for small school districts:

Small districts often face challenges such as limited staffing and budget constraints. To effectively implement a facilities master plan, it is important to tailor the approach to the district's specific size and available resources. Strategies may include utilizing online templates from state agency websites, collaborating with city or county planners and other local agencies while engaging with the community for support.

4. Setting a budget.

A budget for master planning may include consultant fees for architects, engineers, planners, demographers, environmental consultants, project management firms, etc. Consider associated costs for district events, town hall meetings, surveys, publications, and/or studies required for the master plan.

5. Other considerations for master planning.

Launching a facilities master plan can be complex, therefore some districts may want to seek feedback regarding their approach to master planning. If districts choose to engage outside consultants to assist with the development of a facilities master plan, search for consultants experienced in K-12 master planning, school facilities planning, and/or review existing exemplars for FMPs. Please refer to school district FMP exemplars in the Facilities Master Planning Resources section. Other considerations include offering stakeholder meetings at various times and dates to accommodate different schedules and to boost attendance, especially for meetings held after school or in the evening.

Districts will need to consider the updated facilities master planning requirements under Proposition 2 which are explained in greater detail in Chapter 2: *Key Components of a Facilities Master Plan*.

Planning Team Structure

A school facilities master plan committee may be comprised of several members from diverse groups.

FMP Team Members

District Leadership

Superintendent

Assistant Superintendents (business services or facilities department services)

School Board Member(s)

Legal Counsel

Facilities, Maintenance & Operations Divisions

Director of facilities or transportation or maintenance & operations

Director of technology

Director of risk management or emergency services

Educational Services

Director of educational development, curriculum, early learning, special services

Principal

Teacher

Student board member

Consulting Firms

Architect

Engineers

Construction management

Financial advisors

Demographers

Environmental consultants

Community Partners

Parents

PTA president

City and/or county planning division representatives

Local business partners

Student advocacy group members

Notes for small school districts:

While small school districts may not have large planning committees or engage extensively with community stakeholders, small districts can still form focused panels composed of dedicated staff and community members. These smaller committees play a vital role in the FMP process by addressing the unique needs and priorities of their local community.

Stakeholder Engagement

To ensure a well-developed facilities master plan, it is important to engage students, parents, teachers, staff, community members and other stakeholders throughout the process which will provide diverse perspectives leading to favorable outcomes.

When to engage:

You should engage early and often during the process. The planning of future sites can be facilitated by early and frequent communication between local agencies, district staff and other stakeholders.

How to engage:

In-person meetings

Town hall meetings

School newsletters or social media

Community workshops

Partner with community members for a broader outreach

Online platforms (webinars, online surveys)

Notes for small school districts:

Small districts can leverage tools like home-to-school surveys, teacher-parent workshops, and principal meetings to gather insights and foster community support, laying the foundation for a collaborative master plan.

Equity and Transparency

Facilities master plans should be developed with considerations from a wide range of community input to ensure equitable contributions throughout the planning process. Equity ensures that all community members receive access to the same services and resources. In this digital age, information can be shared widely and instantly. To support equitable communication, districts may consider including written and digital updates along with hosting informational meetings with staff and parents/guardians.

When developing and communicating a facilities master plan, transparency is critical to earning community trust and fostering collaboration. Best practices for transparency

throughout the process include starting with a clear objective, establishing an inclusive planning process, providing access to data, and communicating regularly and clearly. Below are helpful tips for ensuring transparency throughout the FMP process.

- Publicly share the meeting schedule, agendas, and minutes.
- Invite public participation early and often.
- Share the data: Enrollment projections, facility condition assessments, cost estimates, demographic studies, etc.
- Make data understandable with summaries, visuals, and frequently asked questions.
- Use multiple platforms: Email, social media, printed newsletters/memos.
- Provide timelines for the planning process.
- Be transparent about what is and what isn't possible.
- Show how community input has influenced the plan.
- Share updates, budget reports, and project status reports.

Facilities Master Plans, a Living Document

A facilities master plan is a living document that guides a school district's long-term facility planning and capital investment decisions. While historically tied to funding requirements, today's FMP serves a broader purpose: aligning facilities with educational goals, enrollment trends, and community priorities. The plan's legitimacy and strategic value are anchored by formal adoption by the district's governing board and maintained through regular updates that reflect changing needs and conditions.

Adoption of the Facilities Master Plan

Before implementation, the FMP must be formally adopted by the district's governing board. This adoption process ensures that:

- The plan reflects the educational vision and operational priorities of the district.
- There is public transparency and accountability in the planning process.
- Community input and stakeholder feedback are acknowledged and incorporated.
- The FMP is fully integrated with board policy, fiscal strategy, and long-range planning.

Role of the Governing Board

The governing board plays a central role in overseeing the FMP by:

- Adopting the initial plan following public review and input.
- Reviewing and approving all updates, ensuring the plan remains relevant and responsive.
- Aligning the FMP with the district's educational mission, fiscal outlook, and community values.
- Using the plan as a policy tool to guide decisions related to capital improvements, school consolidations, boundary adjustments, new facility needs, and educational program offerings.

Facilities Master Plan Updates

Facilities planning must be responsive to demographic, educational, financial, and facility changes. The FMP should be updated regularly to ensure it reflects current realities and future projections.

Update Cycle and Triggers

Five-year update requirement: The FMP should be updated at least every five years to maintain relevance and to support strategic decision-making. An earlier review may be necessary when significant changes occur within the district that affect school facilities. Some of these triggers may include unexpected shifts in enrollment, advancements in technology, new funding opportunities, budget reductions, new regulations, and evolving educational needs. When such changes arise, the district may need to update the FMP accordingly to ensure it remains relevant.

Early or Interim Updates

Updates may be needed sooner when:

- A local bond measure (e.g., Proposition 39) is proposed or passed.
- Significant enrollment shifts occur.
- Major changes in educational programming or grade configurations arise.
- Regulatory changes or safety issues (e.g., seismic, Americans with Disabilities Act, fire/life safety) necessitate facility upgrades.

Chapter 2: Key Components of a Facilities Master Plan

A strong facilities master plan (FMP) is comprehensive, forward-looking, and tailored to the unique needs of the local community. While every local educational agency's (LEA) plan will differ in length and detail, certain core components appear in nearly all effective FMPs. Together, these elements provide a framework for assessing current conditions, planning for future needs, and aligning facilities decisions with educational goals.

This chapter describes each major component of a typical FMP and offers guidance on what to include, how to organize the information, and why it matters. The intent is not to prescribe a single format but to help LEAs develop a clear, practical document that supports long-term facility decision-making, fiscal responsibility, and community trust. LEAs are encouraged to adapt these recommendations to their local priorities, available resources, and planning capacity.

District Profile and Context

An FMP should begin with a clear understanding of the LEA's identity, history, and educational direction. The district profile provides the foundational context for all planning decisions by describing who the LEA serves, how it has evolved, and what goals guide its future.

LEAs may include a brief narrative summarizing the geographic setting, community characteristics, and historical development. This may include the number and types of schools, enrollment trends over time, and demographic or economic factors that influence planning. Maps or charts can help illustrate service boundaries, regional context, or growth patterns in the surrounding community.

This section should also highlight the LEA's mission, vision, and long-term educational goals, as adopted by the governing board. These statements provide the philosophical foundation for facility decisions, ensuring that investments in the built environment support instructional priorities and equity commitments. Where applicable, LEAs may describe recent or anticipated changes to educational programs, grade configurations, or community partnerships that could affect future facility needs.

In addition, the section may outline relationships with local government and community agencies such as planning departments, recreation authorities, and health organizations. Coordination with these partners can help ensure that school facilities align with broader community planning and infrastructure efforts.

Notes for Small School Districts

For small or rural LEAs, the profile may be relatively brief but should still convey the unique characteristics of the community and the role schools play within it. Regardless of size, the goal is to establish a clear picture of the LEA's setting, values, and educational direction to inform subsequent planning.

Educational Program Needs and Space Requirements

Start facilities planning with insight into the LEA's educational programs, instructional goals, and long-term vision for student learning. This section describes how facilities support those programs and identifies any gaps between educational needs and available space.

LEAs should evaluate how each major instructional program functions within existing facilities and whether changes to classroom layouts, shared spaces, or specialized areas may better support teaching and learning. The analysis should also consider how facilities can adapt to new or evolving programs over time. This analysis helps align future facility investments with educational priorities and anticipated program growth.

Program areas to consider include:

- **Elementary, Middle, and High School Programs:** General education space needs, grade-level configurations, and differences across school types.
- **Early Education Programs:** Larger classroom spaces designed for preschool, transitional kindergarten, and kindergarten students, typically including self-contained restrooms, developmentally appropriate furnishings, indoor–outdoor flow, age-appropriate play equipment nearby, and proximity to drop-off and pick-up areas.
- **Special Education Programs:** Classroom configurations, accessibility, sensory and therapy rooms, wellness or inclusion spaces,
- **Career Technical Education:** Specialized labs, workshops, or industry-aligned spaces that meet safety and equipment standards.
- **Physical Education:** Indoor and outdoor spaces that support physical activity, including gymnasiums, multipurpose rooms, fields, courts, and where appropriate, locker rooms, staff offices, and storage.
- **Alternative and Continuation High Schools:** Flexible environments that may include independent study, credit recovery, personalized learning, and access to supportive services such as counseling or probation programs.
- **Adult Education Programs:** Classrooms, computer labs, and community-oriented spaces supporting adult learners, often on shared campuses.
- **Gifted and Talented Education:** Instructional spaces that support differentiated learning, project work, and enrichment.
- **After-School and Summer Programs:** Access to multi-use rooms, gyms, and facilities available beyond the regular school day.

- **Community School Services:** Spaces for health, counseling, family engagement, and other supports that promote student well-being. LEAs may also find it helpful to reference California's [Whole Child Community Equity Framework](#) when considering how facilities can support holistic student and family needs.
- **Other Locally Determined Programs:** Unique instructional offerings that require specific facility considerations, such as dual language immersion, arts integration, or Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) programs.

LEAs may also examine site design features that affect program access and safety, including traffic flow, parking, and outdoor learning areas. The goal is to create a clear link between instructional priorities and physical environments, allowing facilities to support both current and evolving programs.

Facilities Inventory

The facilities inventory establishes a comprehensive record of all district-owned sites, buildings, and major assets. It forms the factual foundation of an FMP by documenting what facilities exist, where they are located, and how they are used. A clear and current inventory helps districts analyze capacity, understand facility distribution, and coordinate future modernization or expansion efforts.

An effective inventory may include the following information for each school or facility:

- Site name, address, and geographic location.
- Campus layout, acreage, and land use.
- Year of original construction and most recent modernization.
- Total building square footage and the allocation of instructional versus support spaces.
- Number, age, and condition of portable classrooms.
- Presence and size of key facilities such as libraries, cafeterias, multipurpose rooms, and gymnasiums.
- Number of staff and student restrooms, including adequate restrooms in transitional kindergarten (TK) and kindergarten classrooms, or near special day classrooms.
- Specialized or shared-use facilities such as district offices, transportation yards, or maintenance buildings.
- Outdoor learning and recreational spaces, including playfields, play structures, equipment storage, courts, and gardens.
- Site infrastructure features such as parking, parent and bus drop-off loading zones, circulation routes, or stormwater management systems.
- Inventory of tree canopy, surfaces, and energy systems.

The inventory should be updated periodically to reflect new construction, modernizations, or facility closures. Maintaining an accurate, organized record supports

transparency and helps inform future eligibility for various state or local funding programs.

Notes for Small School Districts:

For smaller LEAs with limited resources, a basic spreadsheet or summary table listing each facility, address, building type, square footage, and year built can serve as a sufficient inventory. Even a simple, well-documented list provides an essential foundation for tracking facility assets and supporting future funding or planning efforts.

Facilities Condition Assessments

Facilities condition assessments (FCAs) evaluate the physical state and functionality of LEA facilities to identify repair, modernization, and replacement needs. While the facilities inventory establishes what exists, the FCA determines what condition it is in. Together, these tools allow districts to make informed, data-driven decisions about maintenance priorities and long-term capital investments.

A comprehensive FCA typically includes:

- **Building Systems:** Assessment of roofs, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), plumbing, electrical, lighting, and structural components, including evaluation of code compliance, general condition, and remaining useful life of major systems.
- **Site Features:** Review of parking, drop-off and pick-up areas, pedestrian access, playfields, fencing, drainage, and outdoor lighting.
- **Safety and Accessibility:** Verification of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, emergency egress routes, fire alarm systems, and security measures.
- **Environmental Quality:** Examination of ventilation, air quality, acoustics, and temperature control, including identification of issues such as moisture or mold.
- **Technology Infrastructure:** Evaluation of network connectivity, wireless coverage, classroom instructional technology, and operational systems such as cameras, access controls, and energy management systems.
- **Climate Resilience and Environmental Risk:** Evaluation of facility exposure to extreme heat or freezing conditions, wildfire smoke and air quality impacts, flooding, stormwater issues, sea level rise, and other climate-related hazards, including assessment of campus resilience and operational continuity measures.
- **Educational Suitability:** Assessment of whether instructional, administrative, and support spaces effectively meet current and projected educational programs, student needs, technology requirements, and instructional delivery models.

LEAs are encouraged to use the [Facility Inspection Tool \(FIT\)](#) developed by the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) or similar methods to promote consistency and transparency in evaluating conditions. FIT results can be incorporated into the master plan to document facility performance and to inform prioritization of projects.

Findings from the FCA may be summarized in narrative form or illustrated using maps, color-coded condition ratings, or summary tables. These visuals help communicate needs clearly with governing boards and the public. Including notes on system age, replacement cycles, and estimated repair horizons helps LEAs anticipate upcoming needs and plan phased investments over time. The results should directly inform the capital improvement plan (CIP), supporting the identification and sequencing of projects based on condition, safety, and educational adequacy.

Notes for Small School Districts:

A simplified FCA using FIT data, maintenance records, staff observations, and photographs can effectively capture essential information. Staff can also note approximate ages of key systems to anticipate replacement timelines and plan budgets and repairs proactively. The goal is to identify urgent issues, ensure safe operations, and guide maintenance and modernization decisions.

Enrollment Projections and Demographic Analysis

Understanding future student enrollment is essential for effective facility planning. Accurate projections help districts determine when and where additional capacity may be needed, how to right-size existing schools, and how to align investments with community growth or decline. This section of the FMP should present a clear picture of both current and anticipated student populations across the district.

The goal of this section is to analyze historic enrollment patterns, identify trends that influence growth or decline, and forecast future enrollment by grade level and school site. Enrollment projections typically span a period of five to ten years and should be updated periodically to reflect changing demographics and housing development activity.

LEAs should also examine broader community trends, including housing growth, migration patterns, and regional birth rates. Collaboration with local city and county planning departments, regional councils of government, and developers can help ensure projections align with expected land use changes and new housing developments.

A comprehensive enrollment and demographic analysis may include:

- Historical enrollment trends by grade level, school, and attendance area.
- Five to ten-year enrollment projections, both districtwide and by site or boundary.

- Birth rate trends, student yield factors, and migration patterns into or out of the district.
- Housing and development activity, including approved and proposed projects.
- Local land use and zoning plans that may affect future residential growth.
- Charter school openings or expansions, interdistrict transfers, and specialized programs that may shift enrollment patterns.
- Maps or charts illustrating current and projected enrollment distribution.

LEAs may use publicly available data sources to support this work, such as the California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), local County Assessor parcel maps, Department of Finance population forecasts, and city or county housing permit data.

Modern technology can greatly enhance the accuracy and visualization of demographic studies. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and demographic projection software allow districts to analyze enrollment trends spatially, visualize boundary changes, and assess the relationship between housing and school capacity. Many districts engage consultants for complex demographic analyses, but smaller or resource-limited districts can use publicly available data and simple mapping tools to achieve meaningful results.

The findings from this analysis inform several key parts of the master plan, including capacity and utilization analysis, boundary adjustments, and capital improvement priorities. Clear and transparent presentation using tables, graphs, and maps helps stakeholders understand projected needs and the rationale for future facility decisions.

Notes for Small School Districts:

A practical approach may include compiling enrollment data from student information systems, reviewing county housing permit reports, consulting with local planning agencies, and applying staff knowledge of community changes. A simple trend analysis can effectively guide discussions about facility needs and ensure the district plans proactively for enrollment shifts.

Capacity and Utilization Analysis

A capacity and utilization analysis compares the LEA's existing facility capacity to current and projected enrollment to determine whether school sites are underused or overcrowded. This analysis helps LEAs make informed decisions about boundary adjustments, grade-level configurations, modernization priorities, or the need for new construction.

Capacity represents the number of students a facility can accommodate based on classroom counts, room sizes, and program use. Utilization measures how efficiently that capacity is being used in practice. Together, these metrics provide insight into how well existing space supports educational programs and operational efficiency.

The analysis may include:

- Permanent and portable classroom capacity by site.
- Current and projected enrollment by site and grade span.
- Utilization rates calculated by comparing capacity to enrollment.
- Programmatic use of space, such as special education, early education, or adult education classrooms.
- Site features that affect usable capacity, including shared rooms, undersized multipurpose spaces, or aging portables.
- Circulation and operational factors such as parking, drop-off and pick-up areas, physical education spaces, playfields, and outdoor learning spaces.

When utilization exceeds 100 percent, the site is considered overcrowded and may require portable classrooms, schedule modifications, or boundary adjustments. Persistent overcrowding can limit program delivery and impact safety and supervision.

Conversely, sites operating significantly below capacity may face inefficiencies in staffing, energy use, and maintenance. In both cases, data-driven analysis supports equitable allocation of resources and more strategic long-term planning.

Site utilization analysis should extend beyond classroom counts to consider the adequacy of shared and support spaces, including administration, food service, multipurpose rooms, and outdoor areas. The goal is to understand how all parts of the campus function together and whether they meet the needs of students and staff.

Visual aids such as site diagrams, color-coded utilization maps, or summary tables can help communicate findings clearly to stakeholders. Utilization analysis also provides critical input for the CIP, identifying which sites may benefit most from modernization, expansion, or reconfiguration.

Notes for Small School Districts:

Smaller LEAs may complete a simplified capacity and utilization review using classroom counts, enrollment data, and staff knowledge of site operations. Understanding how existing spaces are being used and where constraints exist helps ensure that limited resources are targeted toward the greatest needs.

Capital Improvement Plan

The CIP turns an LEA's identified needs into a clear and prioritized list of projects. It serves as both an internal planning tool and a public communication document that shows how the district plans to invest in its facilities over time.

A strong CIP helps LEAs make informed, transparent decisions about where and when to modernize, expand, or replace facilities. Projects may include new school construction, building modernization, system upgrades such as roofing or HVAC, accessibility or safety improvements, or site enhancements like parking, play areas, and drop-off zones.

For each project, the plan should describe the scope of work, estimated cost, and expected timeline. LEAs should also note how each project meets an identified need, whether it addresses overcrowding, aging infrastructure, safety, or program growth.

In addition to being a planning document, the CIP can help LEAs communicate effectively with their community, particularly when seeking voter support for a bond measure. A clear, well-organized project list helps community members understand which schools will be improved and how funds will be distributed. This transparency builds public trust and can be a valuable tool in gaining support for local bond campaigns.

A complete CIP may include the following:

- A prioritized list of projects by site and type such as new construction, modernization, or replacement.
- Cost estimates and proposed schedules or phasing.
- Clear connections between projects and identified facility needs.
- A summary of how projects align with long-term educational goals and available funding.

The plan should be realistic and achievable based on the district's funding capacity and staff resources. LEAs are encouraged to review and update their CIP regularly to reflect progress, changing needs, and new funding opportunities.

Notes for Small School Districts:

Smaller LEAs may opt for a simplified capital plan that lists a few top priorities, estimated costs, and possible funding sources. A concise table or narrative summary can effectively convey priorities and demonstrate thoughtful long-term planning to the community and governing board.

Funding and Finance Strategy

A well-prepared FMP should describe how the LEA intends to fund its planned projects. Understanding the available financial tools helps ensure that projects are realistic and aligned with the LEA's fiscal capacity.

LEAs may use a combination of local, state, and federal funding sources to support capital improvements. The plan should briefly explain how each source may contribute to the overall program and identify which projects depend on specific funding streams. Where possible, districts should also note the timing of anticipated revenues and any constraints or match requirements that apply.

Common funding sources may include the following:

- **Local general obligation bonds or parcel taxes:** Approved by voters to finance new construction, modernization, and other major improvements.
- **Developer fees and mitigation agreements:** Contributions from new housing or commercial development to offset the impact of growth on school facilities.
- **State school facility program grants:** Matching funds for eligible new construction or modernization projects.
- **Federal or state categorical programs:** Targeted funding for specific purposes, such as energy efficiency or health and safety improvements.
- **Routine restricted maintenance and deferred maintenance funds:** Set-aside funding for ongoing and long-term facility upkeep.
- **Joint-use partnerships and grants:** Collaborative opportunities with local governments, nonprofits, or private partners for shared-use facilities or amenities.

LEAs are encouraged to maintain a long-range financial outlook that connects their FMP with their broader fiscal planning. This may include identifying funding gaps, developing contingency plans, and coordinating with business officials to align the timing of projects with available cash flow.

Notes for Small School Districts:

Smaller and rural LEAs often show creativity in maintaining safe, functional facilities despite limited local funding. When property tax bases or development activity are low, participation in the School Facilities Program (SFP) Financial Hardship or Facility Hardship programs can be especially important. Identifying these opportunities, along with potential grants or partnerships, helps ensure that limited resources are directed toward the greatest facility needs.

Community Engagement and Input

Meaningful community engagement is essential to effective facilities master planning. School facilities are public assets, and decisions about how they are improved, maintained, and expanded should reflect the values and priorities of the communities they serve. The planning process should be inclusive, transparent, and responsive to the diverse needs of students, staff, and families.

The FMP should describe how the district engaged stakeholders during development and how their input shaped the plan's recommendations. Engagement may include community meetings, design charrettes, surveys, focus groups, advisory committees, or discussions with local agencies and civic partners. The plan should summarize key themes raised during outreach and explain how feedback influenced priorities and project selection. Clear communication about decision-making builds trust, especially when LEAs are considering local bond measures or major capital investments.

LEAs may wish to consider the following:

- How to reach a broad and representative group of participants, including families, students, and staff.
- What engagement methods are most accessible and effective for the local community.
- How stakeholder feedback is documented and incorporated into final recommendations.
- How transparency and accountability will be maintained after plan adoption.

Applying an equity lens during planning ensures that facility investments support all students' opportunity to learn, regardless of background or neighborhood. Equity does not mean that every school receives identical improvements; rather, it means that facility quality and resources align with student and community needs. For example, a school serving a large population of English Learners may need spaces for counseling, migrant support, or parent engagement, while another may require modernized science labs or specialized Career Technical Education (CTE) facilities. LEAs should also ensure that no schools experience chronic disrepair or disproportionate delays in modernization compared to others.

As schools often serve as community hubs, LEAs are encouraged to consider how their facilities can support broader community use. This may include after-school programs, adult education, health and wellness services, or access to gyms and multipurpose spaces for public events. Where feasible, joint-use agreements with local governments or nonprofits can expand access and strengthen neighborhood partnerships.

LEAs should also plan for transparency after adoption of the FMP. Posting the plan publicly, providing regular progress updates, and maintaining open communication with stakeholders help sustain community confidence and demonstrate responsible stewardship of public resources.

Notes for Small School Districts:

Smaller LEAs can often engage their communities more directly through existing relationships and local gatherings. Facilities topics may be discussed during regular board meetings, parent events, or informal settings such as school open houses. Collecting feedback through staff discussions, brief surveys, or community conversations can provide meaningful insights and ensure the plan reflects shared local priorities.

Implementation Plan

A strong FMP concludes with a clear roadmap for implementation. This section should describe how the LEA will carry out, monitor, and update its plan over time. An implementation plan helps ensure that the FMP remains a living document, guiding district decisions as needs, funding, and priorities evolve.

LEAs may include a timeline that outlines near-term, mid-term, and long-term projects, along with key milestones such as design, funding, construction, or completion. Linking these milestones to the CIP and funding strategy can help decision-makers coordinate schedules, resources, and staffing.

To promote transparency and accountability, LEAs should establish a process for reviewing progress and updating the plan regularly. This may include:

- Annual or biannual progress reviews with the governing board.
- Updates to project costs, timelines, or priorities based on new information.
- Public reporting on completed and upcoming projects.
- Reassessing facility needs following demographic or programmatic changes.

Maintaining a digital version of the plan and publishing key updates online can also make it easier for the community to track progress and stay informed.

The implementation plan is also an opportunity to identify how future changes will be handled. When new data or funding becomes available, LEAs can use the framework established in the FMP to reassess priorities and make data-informed adjustments rather than starting from scratch.

Notes for Small School Districts:

Smaller LEAs can take a flexible approach to implementation by integrating facilities updates into their regular board reporting cycle. A brief annual summary outlining completed improvements, upcoming priorities, and any changes to enrollment or funding provides an effective mechanism for accountability and continuous planning.

Chapter 3 - Educational Programs with Specialized Facility Needs

School facilities are designed to meet the diverse needs of students and to support the priorities of local educational programs and initiatives. The facilities master planning process provides an opportunity to evaluate facility needs for existing educational programs and to implement new programs. The uniqueness of the educational programs at each site should be considered while evaluating and planning for specific schools during the facilities master plan (FMP) process. There may be site-related or themed schools based on innovative facility design and the FMP should prioritize programs that have special space requirements.

Regardless of the educational programs, local educational agencies (LEAs) should engage community stakeholders early and often in planning and design, including educators and families, to ensure the specialized facilities meet student needs, real-world needs, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The following programs and resources are not an exhaustive list but provide examples of the importance of including educational programs with specialized facility needs in the FMP.

1. Early Learning Facilities
2. Career Technical Education
3. Special Education Facilities
4. Physical Education
5. Makerspaces
6. Outdoor Learning Environments
7. Community School Services

1. Early Learning Facilities

Expanding early education programs, including the implementation of Universal PreKindergarten (UPK), can be a daunting challenge for many districts. Many existing school sites are unable to expand their existing kindergarten complex to include additional classrooms for early learning students. Consequently, preschool, transitional kindergarten and/or kindergarten classrooms and play areas may be placed in different areas on campus. Early learner classrooms should be adaptable to meet the needs of preschool, transitional kindergarten and kindergarten while navigating the requirements of the Department of Social Services/Community Care Licensing (for licensed preschools) and the California Department of Education (CDE).

Key Planning Considerations

- Does your district need to reconfigure attendance boundaries to support UPK?
- Will grade level configurations change to accommodate the addition of early learners (e.g., elementary becomes PreK–4, middle becomes 5–8)?
- Are there closed or underutilized facilities that could be reconfigured to serve early learners?
- Could smaller satellite sites near existing schools help meet space needs? If the district is planning to expand or establish a new school site for early learners, they must engage with the CDE and consult their assigned field representative regarding site selection, site approvals, and any proposed site additions.
- Does the school need additional play areas to support age differences (i.e. fall heights)?
- If reconfiguring existing classroom spaces, are there dedicated restroom facilities for the early learners?

Resources

[Title 5 Regulations for Kindergarten Facilities](#)

[Community Care Licensing Guidelines](#)

2. Career Technical Education

Well planned and designed career technical education (CTE) facilities prepare students for successful careers in a changing economy. Effective planning is the foundation of successful CTE facility development. California CTE facilities must align with both state educational goals and regional workforce needs.

Key Planning Considerations

- Site Access: Placement of theaters and shops may need delivery of materials and necessitate consideration of where they are placed to ensure safe access.
- Articulation of CTE Programs: Expanding CTE opportunities to middle and elementary schools includes consideration of placements on site and providing learning environments that are adaptable to support many industry sectors.
- Adequate ventilation and electrical load should be taken into consideration when reconfiguring existing classrooms into CTE shops.

Resources

[California Department of Education \(CDE\) Plan Review Process](#)

[California CTE Model Curriculum Standards/ Framework Update](#)

3. Special Education Facilities

Students with special needs are part of every school community, and their integration with non-disabled peers is one goal of public-school facility design. An individual with a disability shall be provided with the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the individual in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Evaluating the facilities needs of students should be based on the population of special education students that will be served at each school site. For example, consider the different educational and medical needs of severely disabled, mainstreamed, and special day class students.

Key Planning Considerations

- Do students with special needs who arrive to school on the bus, exit at the same bus loading zone as non-disabled students on campus?

- Are special day classrooms (SDC) dispersed around campus? The goal is that students traveling to an SDC are integrating with the general school population, and students with special needs are not isolated to a corner of campus or a corner of the building where SDCs are clustered.
- Are students who are wheelchair-bound able to access every part of the school facility, including the stage, cafeteria line, restrooms, all classrooms, play structures, and the administration building? The goal is to remove barriers from thresholds and employ features such as gradual grading, ramps, elevators, and lifts to allow all students the freedom to move about campus without encountering obstacles that require complex or circuitous routes to avoid.
- Based on the special education population, does your site need a conference room for parent meetings, and a location for itinerant staff to work such as physical therapy (PT), occupational therapy (OT), and adaptive physical education (APE) teachers?
- Does your site have adequate pull-out spaces and offices to provide pull out services comfortably and confidentially?

Resources

[California Department of Education's Special Education resources page](#)

IDEA Resources for Families:

[Parents and Families - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)

California Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA) coordinate services across school districts to ensure students with disabilities receive appropriate support. The SELPA Association provides professional development, legislative advocacy, and technical assistance.

[California SELPA Association](#)

4. Physical Education

Physical education (PE) spaces have distinct needs. In order to meet the standards-based physical education standards laid out in the [CDE Physical Education Framework](#), a variety of spaces, both outdoor and indoor are needed.

The CDE School Facilities and Transportation Services Division (SFTSD) requires that school sites provide adequate space for all educational programs, including PE. The [CDE Guide to School Site Analysis and Development](#) provides guidance on the amount of space that a school should provide in order to have enough space for teaching PE.

The guide illustrates the fields and courts needed for a variety of activities that meet the state framework.

It is advisable for local educational agencies to evaluate their existing schools for adequate PE spaces and to be aware that enrollment increases can sometimes reduce the outdoor black top and grass space. Additionally, middle schools and high schools often have dedicated PE spaces, but elementary PE spaces may also be used for lunch and recess, so the potential for shared-use challenges should be factored into planning.

Additional considerations should be given for special circumstances that would require alternatives to the standard outdoor fields due to weather conditions (rain, snow, and extreme heat), poor outdoor air quality (pollution, smog, and wildfire smoke), or other factors that might make it advantageous to provide indoor activities.

Key Planning Considerations

- Examine the impact of classrooms occupying the blacktop or field areas to evaluate the site's ability to adequately provide space for physical education.
- Does the site have adequate storage for equipment?
- What accommodations are provided for students with disabilities or medical needs?

Resources

[Physical Education Framework Healthy Children Ready to Learn](#)

[Physical Education Guidelines: Elementary Schools](#)

[Physical Education Guidelines Middle & High School](#)

5. Makerspaces in a Facilities Master Plan

Makerspaces are dynamic, hands-on learning environments designed to foster creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving through Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) activities. In a school district's FMP, makerspaces should be considered not only as instructional enhancements but as long-term, adaptable spaces that align with the district's educational goals, facility standards, and capital investment strategies.

A well-planned makerspace can be as effective with simple materials like cardboard, plastic building blocks, and craft supplies as it is with advanced equipment like 3D printers, laser cutters, and robotics. The focus should be on designing a flexible, sustainable space that reflects the needs of the school community and integrates seamlessly into the broader campus plan.

Key Planning Considerations

- Identify existing infrastructure such as power, mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), networks, and any upgrades needed for tools requiring specialized electrical or ventilation systems when converting existing vacant classrooms into maker spaces.
- Determine whether the maker space is an extension of the library or a stand-alone instructional area.
- Consider acoustic treatments when placed adjacent to classrooms, library, etc.
- Evaluate storage needs to support various grade levels and curriculum.

Resources

[Makerspaces in California Public Libraries: Fostering Community Creativity](#)

[The Maker Movement and K-12 Education](#)

[CDE Fact Sheet: School Facilities and Technology Integration](#)

[CDE Fact Sheet: STEM Learning Environments, Galt High School BEST Academy](#)

6. Outdoor Learning Environments

Integrating outdoor learning environments into facilities master plans is one strategy to optimize educational opportunities and learning spaces while enhancing the curriculum and local goals. While outdoor learning environments are not required like physical education, special education, and early learning facilities, they can be just as important to include in FMPs. Outdoor learning environments can also provide opportunities to expand learning experiences by repurposing outdoor spaces on existing school sites that may be underutilized such as concrete, asphalt, and fields.

Outdoor learning is a priority for many schools and long-range facilities planning for nature-based flexible spaces is integral to student achievement, health, and wellness.

Local school communities often formally embed outdoor learning environments and schoolyard greening in their learning programs and recognize that outdoor spaces for instruction and study have multifunctional uses.

[Outdoor Learning Environments](#) guidance from the CDE offers research and resources that further explore best practices for planning and designing inclusive outdoor learning spaces. Including outdoor learning environments in FMPs can help to facilitate a variety of engaging outdoor learning experiences that integrate standards-based knowledge and skills with environmental education and other local objectives.

Key Planning Considerations

- What are the physical characteristics and possible barriers of transforming outdoor space(s) into learning environments?
- Will there be spaces for direct instruction, small group, large group, and individual learning?
- What is the best way to organize the outdoor space into different outdoor learning areas?
- What types of natural elements are present that can be incorporated?
- How will the outdoor learning environment enhance and support the curriculum?

Resources

[Where Do We Begin? A Toolkit to Move Learning Outdoors](#), Green Schoolyards America.

[Inclusive Design for Outdoor Learning Environments](#), Green Schoolyards America.

7. Community School Services

Schools often serve as centers of the community and may provide a variety of supplemental services such as school-based coordinated health centers, after school programs, counseling, family engagement, food distribution, and other supports that promote student well-being. According to the CDE, [community school strategies](#) can be an effective approach to mitigate the academic and social impacts of emergencies that affect local communities, improve school responsiveness to student and family needs, and to organize school and community resources to address barriers to learning.

As LEAs create or update FMPs to include spaces for various community services, California's [Whole Child Community Equity Framework](#) may be helpful when

considering how facilities can support holistic student and family needs. The CDE LCFF/ Whole Child Resources Map also provides a variety of resources for local educational agencies, schools, and families to serve the needs of the whole child.

Key Planning Considerations

- Co-location: Which public services will benefit students and the community if they are placed together in one location, such as school-based health centers and after school programs?
- Multi-purpose spaces: Are there flexible indoor and outdoor spaces that can be easily converted and adapted for a variety of uses?
- Designated support spaces: Does the school site have the capacity to provide dedicated student support spaces for speech, resources specialist programs (RSP), school psychologists, counseling, social workers, etc.?
- Family and parent engagement: Does the FMP include welcoming and comfortable areas for community collaboration and participation?
- Accessibility: Are the community school spaces accessible and aligned with ADA requirements for all students and adults?

Resources

[CDE LCFF/ Whole Child Resources Map](#)

[Schools As Centers of Community Improve Learning, CDE Fact Sheet](#)

[California Community Schools Partnership Program](#)

Conclusion

While specific educational programs may vary at each school site, long range facilities planning usually includes providing [flexible learning environments](#) and specific architectural designs, equipment, technology, accessibility, and more. Community engagement is a common thread in planning for unique educational programs, no matter what the goals and objectives are for each school. To optimize teaching and learning and to maximize resources and capital investments, the inclusion of educational programs with specialized facility needs is essential in the development of long-range facilities master plans.

Chapter 4 – Additional Considerations and Planning for the Future

Other issues for consideration when developing a long-range facilities master plan (FMP) are those that affect the health and wellness of the school population and the community at large. Access to facilities by all people is also an important consideration. While much of the work of the FMP development is to ensure that the facilities support the educational needs of the students, there are many other considerations that must be included in this process. Sustainability and climate resiliency, while not specifically educational, will affect the operations of the school facilities, and the comfort of building inhabitants. Safety and security considerations enable the local educational agency (LEA) to keep all children and staff safe, for example.

Other issues that planners should consider are the ever-evolving building standards. The *California Code of Regulations*, Title 24 (24 CCR), known as the California Building Standards Codes, are adopted triennially. A requirement for a single issue, such as an electric vehicle charging station, might not have existed when the school was originally constructed. Over the years, as changes are made to the facilities, this construction could trigger new updated requirements. For example, if you make changes to the parking lot, then you must install the infrastructure to provide electric vehicle charging stations. Later editions of Title 24 may require that the actual electric vehicle charging station be installed, not simply the conduit or wiring for installing it in the future. LEAs should consider upcoming changes to Title 24 that may affect the school facilities.

Sustainability

Sustainability refers to design decisions and construction methodologies that promote conservation of resources, create a healthy environment for the building inhabitants, and encourage stewardship of natural ecosystems. Conservation of resources such as energy efficiency, water conservation, and reduced waste outputs save money for local educational agencies (LEAs). The use of sustainable materials, such as recyclable materials and low emitting materials, affects the health of building inhabitants. Ecological stewardship could include heat island reduction, rainwater catchment, and native plantings that minimize damage to the natural world by preserving it for future generations.

LEAs may consider inclusion of sustainable building standards, beyond the building code minimum, when constructing new or modernized projects. The choice to seek a green building rating system certification, such as the Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS) or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) may require LEAs to pass a board resolution or other administrative efforts.

Climate Resiliency

In a time of extreme weather conditions caused by climate change, decisions that might have been unnecessary in the past should be considered to protect the health and

safety of the school population. Extreme weather mitigation and environmental goals can include:

- Wildfire Preparedness
 - Create defensible space around all buildings.
 - Utilize non-flammable building materials (siding/roofing).
 - Create a Wildfire Action Plan.
 - Install systems to alert the community of wildfire dangers and evacuation.
 - Have multiple site entrances for evacuation.
 - Practice evacuation preparedness.
 - Stay informed on how to address [air quality](#) issues.
- Flooding Preparedness
 - Plan for higher ground or rooftop evacuations.
 - Install systems to alert the community of flooding dangers and evacuations.
 - Practice evacuation preparedness.
 - Provide multiple site entrances for evacuation.
- Public Safety Power Shut-offs
 - Consider backup generators.
 - Install solar energy systems (photovoltaic panels) with battery backup.
 - Design buildings with plenty of natural light and natural ventilation.
 - Provide outdoor learning when air quality permits.
- Air Quality
 - Plan for adequate indoor physical education spaces for bad air quality days due to wildfire smoke, smog, or proximity to pollution sources such as freeways or major roads.
 - Start a program promoting “no idling in the queue” during student drop-off and pick-up times.
 - Update heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and filtration regularly and when required due to poor air quality.
 - Evaluate the air flow to ensure that there are adequate air changes within all spaces occupied by students and staff.
- Excess Heat Mitigation
 - Plant and use shade trees and/or shade structures.
 - Reduce heat island effects by choosing light surfaces for pavement and roofs.

- Remove pavement to allow more natural surfaces, while maintaining surfaces that are needed for accessibility.
- Design buildings to reduce west facing windows to limit interior heat gain.
- Utilize sunshades or films on windows to reduce heat gain.
- Take advantage of natural prevailing winds for natural cooling.
- Provide air conditioning in at least some of the buildings to allow for escape from extreme heat.
- Consider providing other systems such as evaporative cooling and fans to move air through spaces to make them feel cooler.
- Provide adequate drinking water for all school inhabitants.

Safety, Security, and Emergency Preparedness

Other safety considerations that can be included in the master planning of facilities include physical safety infrastructure, egress routes, use of technology in safety and security, and integration with emergency plans.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is part of physical safety infrastructure. This is a system for creating defensible spaces using the following strategies:

- Natural Surveillance
- Natural Access Control
- Territorial Reinforcement
- Maintenance

The CDE fact sheet [Essentials in School Facilities Safety - CPTED](#) provides a summary of the four basic principles of this multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design.

Creating egress routes, not only within the buildings (as required by the California Building Code) but also on the site, is necessary to allow for safe evacuation. Planning site purchases based on adequate egress from the site, such as at least two access points from different roads, helps ensure that the school can evacuate the site safely in the event of wildfire, flooding, active shooter, or another catastrophic event.

The use of technology can enhance the safety and security of the occupants of a school campus. Some examples of safety and security technology include fire, smoke, and earthquake alarms, surveillance cameras, and electronic locks. When developing a long-range FMP, careful consideration of the types of technologies important to the LEA should be given.

Planning for emergencies is an integral part of site design and long-range facility planning. While some emergency preparedness is operational in nature, many aspects

of preparedness are designed into the physical facilities. As previously mentioned, CPTED strategies, providing adequate egress routes for evacuation, the use of technology, and climate mitigation measures can all be included in the emergency planning process.

Indoor Air Quality

It is important to ensure that the site can offer safe indoor air quality (IAQ) for students and staff, whether contaminants are inside, such as viruses, or outside, from woodsmoke or traffic. The CDE provides guidance and resources for [Healthy School Facilities: Indoor Air Quality](#).

Consider adding more herbaceous borders and trees to improve campus air quality. If the school is in proximity to traffic pollutants, herbaceous borders that are tall and long enough along the exposed side of campus can be effective to protect play areas and HVAC intake vents in nearby buildings from exposure to traffic pollution. Please refer to the following resources for more information:

[EPA Recommendations for Constructing Roadside Vegetation Barriers to Improve Near-Road Air Quality](#)

[EPA Best Practices for Reducing Near-Road Pollution Exposures at Schools \(EPA-420-R-21-022, October 2021\)](#)

For Spaces Without Air-Conditioning

Evaluate the air flow to ensure that there are adequate air changes within all spaces occupied by students and staff. The EPA's free [Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Action Kit](#) provides best practices to help schools plan and implement an IAQ management plan and resources to resolve IAQ issues.

All-Access Restrooms

Being able to access restrooms safely and without fear of shame or stigma affects student health, learning, attendance, and school climate for all students. Some school districts are responding to student needs by creating all-access restroom facilities that are designed to be inclusive of all genders. Providing guidance on this timely topic supports the CDE's goals to provide safe, inclusive, and comfortable learning environments that positively affect student achievement and well-being. The following website provides guidance and best practices for creating these spaces to protect the health, privacy, and safety of all students:

[All-Access Restrooms](#)

While the decision to provide all-access restrooms is a local one, if the LEA chooses to do so, these best practices can help LEAs decide how to pursue all access facilities within your school.

Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law that ensures that everyone, regardless of ability, can access and use public facilities. The ADA, which was enacted in 1990, prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities. Accessible building standards are provided in the California Building Code. Since many older buildings have not been upgraded to meet these standards, the issue of non-compliant facilities should be included in plans for any future projects. Careful evaluation of your existing facilities to ensure that they will be brought into compliance with current laws and regulations is an important step to take when planning for your facility's needs.

Because the California Building Code requirements are only enforceable if a new project is being constructed, and only for the portion of the school site where the project takes place, schools often do not address accessibility upgrades for years. However, ADA is a civil rights law. This means that LEAs can be forced to make changes to existing facilities or even be subject to heavy fines or lawsuit settlement if portions of the school campus remain inaccessible to disabled persons. It is in the LEA's best interests to make necessary accessibility upgrades to reduce their financial liability.

Laws and Regulations

[The Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[Chapter 11B Accessibility to Public Buildings, Public Accommodations, Commercial Buildings and Public Housing- 2025 California Building Code Volumes 1 and 2, Title 24, Part 2](#)

Minimum Essential Facilities

As a school site changes over the years due to demographic changes, such as nearby school closures or additional students from new housing constructed in the attendance boundaries, the minimum essential facilities (MEF) should be adjusted to allow for additional students on the site. Issues that need to be considered when evaluating existing facilities for having adequate MEF include the following:

- Are the cafeteria or multi-purpose rooms adequately sized to serve all students?
- Are there enough restrooms to serve all students?
- Are the restrooms located so they are easily accessed by all students?

- Is there enough space on the site to provide adequate physical education opportunities for all students?
- If kindergarten or transitional kindergarten (TK) classrooms must be added, are there enough restrooms for these students that meet supervisory and size needs for these smaller children?
- Are shared facilities like libraries, computer labs, or music rooms large enough to accommodate all children on the school site?

Planning for the Future

The FMP plays a critical role far beyond regulatory compliance. It serves as a foundational guide that informs a wide spectrum of district functions—linking facilities decisions to broader strategic, financial, and community priorities. The following key areas illustrate how the FMP supports effective, forward-thinking district leadership.

Uses of the Facilities Master Plan

Beyond adoption and compliance, the FMP is a strategic tool with wide-ranging applications.

Strategic Planning

Supports long-range capital and operational planning.

Informs decisions on boundary adjustments, school reconfiguration, and facilities lifecycle.

Funding and Bond Campaigns

Provides data-driven justification for local bond initiatives and state/federal funding requests.

Builds public trust by clearly linking project priorities to educational goals and fiscal responsibility.

Community Engagement

Serves as a communication tool that reflects community input and equity commitments.

Demonstrates transparency and responsiveness in facilities decisions.

Operational Alignment

Connects long-term vision to day-to-day facilities management.

Guides preventive maintenance and resource allocation.

Planning Horizons

The FMP should include both near-term and long-range planning elements.

Five-Year Capital Plan

- **Project Prioritization:** Ranked projects based on urgency, safety, equity, and instructional needs.
- **Project Scope Summaries:** Concise descriptions of each project's purpose and components.
- **Cost Estimates and Budget Alignment:** Preliminary budgeting to support funding decisions and bond planning.

10-Year Organizational Outlook

- **Enrollment and Grade Configuration Changes:** Anticipated shifts based on demographic trends and instructional strategy.
- **Attendance Boundary Adjustments:** Planned redistricting to balance enrollment and maximize facility use.
- **School Closures or Consolidations:** Data-informed strategies to manage underutilized facilities or respond to enrollment decline.
- **Property Acquisition or Disposal:** Identification of land needs or surplus sites.
- **Facility Lifecycle Planning:** Projects for modernization, expansion, demolition, or new construction aligned with the district's vision.

Deferred Maintenance Planning

The FMP should include a comprehensive deferred maintenance strategy to preserve and extend the life of district assets.

Key Components:

- **Site-Specific Needs Assessments:** Detailed conditions analysis for each site.
- **Prioritization Framework:** Criteria to rank projects based on life/safety, preventive value, and aesthetics.
- **Funding Sources:** Integration of the Restricted Maintenance Account, State Deferred Maintenance Program, and other local sources.
- **Alignment with Capital Projects:** Ensures modernization and maintenance efforts are coordinated and cost-effective.

Chapter 4 Conclusion

Planning for the future of school facilities requires more than addressing immediate space and programmatic needs—it demands foresight, adaptability, and a commitment to the well-being of all who learn and work within them. By integrating sustainability, safety, accessibility, and climate resiliency into every stage of facilities master planning, local educational agencies strengthen not only their buildings but their communities. A truly comprehensive FMP recognizes that educational excellence and environmental stewardship are inseparable. The most successful plans evolve alongside changing

conditions, advancing technologies, and emerging community priorities. In this way, the FMP becomes a dynamic instrument of leadership ensuring that the physical environments of learning remain safe, inclusive, and enduring reflections of each district's vision for the future.

Conclusion

A facilities master plan (FMP) is more than a collection of data, charts, and projects. It is the physical expression of a district's educational vision. It reflects how a community values its learners, honors its past investments, and plans intentionally for the generations yet to come. Every classroom, field, and shared space described within its pages represents a commitment to equitable opportunity, student well-being, and the enduring relationship between learning and place.

Throughout this guidance, several core themes emerge: Thoughtful planning rooted in educational goals; transparency and engagement that build community trust; fiscal responsibility grounded in data; and flexibility that allows the plan to evolve as needs and priorities shift. Together, these principles ensure that facilities are not static structures but living systems that adapt to demographic change, pedagogical innovation, and environmental realities.

An FMP is, at its heart, a living document. One that grows, refines, and renews itself through time. It demands care, reflection, and revision, much like the educational mission it supports. When approached as a living framework rather than a fixed blueprint, the plan becomes a bridge between vision and action, between today's needs and tomorrow's possibilities.

Ultimately, the vitality of a facilities master plan lies not only in its design but in its stewardship. Each update, each dialogue, each re-examination of priorities breathes new life into the document, ensuring that it continues to serve as both a compass and a covenant—a testament to the shared belief that the environments where students learn are inseparable from the futures we imagine for them.

Appendixes

Appendix A: Facilities Master Plan Elements vs. Proposition 2 Requirements

Appendix B: Additional Required Elements per Proposition 2

Appendix A: Facilities Master Plan Elements vs. Proposition 2 Requirements

FMP Element	Included in Typical FMP?	Best Practice	Required by Prop 2?	Description of Requirement
District Profile and Context	Yes	Provide a concise overview of the district's history, regional setting, community characteristics, and long-term educational goals.	Somewhat	<i>Ed. Code</i> § 17070.54(c)(8): Must describe how the FMP aligns with LCAP Priority 1 (school facilities).
Educational Program Needs and Space Requirements	Yes	Describe how instructional programs influence space needs and facility types.	No	Not addressed in Prop 2.
Facilities Inventory	Yes	Catalog all district sites and buildings, noting age, size, use, and essential site features.	Yes	<i>Ed. Code</i> § 17070.54(c)(1) and (d): Must include, for each school, year built, square footage, modernization history, pupil capacity, age and number of portables, and presence of a cafeteria, library, and gymnasium.
Facilities Condition Assessments	Yes	Evaluate the overall condition of each facility, including structural, mechanical, and interior elements, to identify repair, modernization, and maintenance needs.	No	Not addressed in Prop 2.
Enrollment and Demographic Projections	Yes	Forecast enrollment trends by grade and school site over a 5–10 year period, considering birth rates, housing trends, and student mobility.	Yes	<i>Ed. Code</i> § 17070.54(c)(3): Requires five-year enrollment projection using SFP growth methods (<i>Ed. Code</i> §§ 17071.75–17071.76).
Capacity and Utilization Analysis	Yes	Compare current and projected enrollment to school capacity to identify underused or overcrowded sites and facilities.	Yes	<i>Ed. Code</i> § 17070.54(c)(2): Must include “existing classroom capacity” per <i>Ed. Code</i> §§ 17071.10 and 17071.25.
Capital Improvement Plan	Yes	Prioritize planned projects with estimated costs, timelines, and justifications based on facility needs.	Somewhat	<i>Ed. Code</i> § 17070.54(c)(4): Requires a “capital planning budget.”

Funding and Finance Strategy	Yes	Identify funding sources, including local bonds, developer fees, and state or federal programs.	Yes	<i>Ed. Code</i> § 17070.54(c)(5): Must list financing sources for acquisition, new construction, modernization, and lead remediation.
Community Engagement and Input	Yes	Document stakeholder engagement and explain how community feedback informed priorities and decisions.	No	Not addressed in Prop 2.
Implementation Plan	Yes	Outline a roadmap for how and when projects will be implemented, and a plan for monitoring progress, updating the FMP, and aligning it with future needs.	Somewhat	Proposition 2 requires that the LEA update its FMP to reflect any changes in enrollment, capacity, or other areas, as appropriate for purposes of participating in the school facilities program. LEAs must submit a “five-year” plan.
Assessed Valuation	No	Not typically included in an FMP but can be useful in informing an LEA’s capital funding capacity.	Yes	<i>Ed. Code</i> § 17070.54(c)(6): Must verify district’s current assessed property value from the local government entity.
Deferred Maintenance Plan	No	Not typically included in an FMP but maintained separately.	Yes	<i>Ed. Code</i> § 17070.54(c)(7): Must include the district’s certified deferred maintenance plan (<i>Ed. Code</i> § 17070.75).

Appendix B: Additional Required Elements per Proposition 2

Proposition 2 established that local educational agencies (LEAs) must prepare and submit a facilities master plan (FMP) as a condition of eligibility for School Facility Program (SFP) funding. The statute outlines several required components, including two elements that are not typically part of most FMPs: verification of the LEA's current assessed valuation and a deferred maintenance plan.

As the California Department of Education (CDE) is not the approving authority for these components, LEAs should consult the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) for specific requirements and submission procedures. Please see OPSC's [*School Facility Program Guidelines for the Five-Year School Facilities Master Plan*](#). The following information is provided for general reference only.

Verification of Current Assessed Value

Required under Proposition 2:

"Verification of the applicable school district's current assessed value from the appropriate local government entity that collects and maintains this information."
(*Education Code* Section 17070.54(c)(6))

The total assessed value of taxable property within an LEA's boundaries reflects its potential to generate local funding for facilities. This figure, obtained from the county assessor's office, is used by OPSC to determine funding eligibility and match ratios under the SFP.

Although this data is required under Proposition 2, it is not typically included in an FMP. Some LEAs, however, may choose to reference it to help describe their community's economic context or overall funding capacity.

The California Department of Education (CDE) does not collect or verify this information. LEAs should contact OPSC or their county assessor for the most current requirements and data sources.

Note for Small School Districts:

Smaller or rural LEAs can usually obtain assessed valuation information by contacting the county assessor's office directly. Most counties publish annual valuation summaries or will provide the total assessed value upon request. Including the figure, fiscal year, and source agency creates a clear record for future reference.

Deferred Maintenance Plan

Required under Proposition 2:

"The school district's deferred maintenance plan certified pursuant to Section

17070.75.”

(*Education Code* Section 17070.54(c)(7))

Deferred maintenance refers to the repair or replacement of building components and systems that have been postponed due to funding limitations or competing priorities. These may include roofs, HVAC systems, plumbing, electrical, flooring, exterior finishes, or paving. Under Proposition 2, LEAs must maintain a certified deferred maintenance plan as part of their overall facilities planning framework.

The process of preparing or updating a deferred maintenance plan offers an opportunity to better understand the condition of facilities and to coordinate short-term repairs with long-term capital improvements. An effective plan typically identifies needed work, estimated costs, and proposed timelines for addressing each item.

A well-developed deferred maintenance plan can help LEAs to:

- Prioritize critical repairs before they become emergencies.
- Integrate facility upkeep with modernization and replacement cycles.
- Extend the usable life of existing facilities and reduce life-cycle costs.
- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility and stewardship of public assets.

LEAs may use a variety of data sources to inform their plan, such as:

- Facility Inspection Tool (FIT) results
- Maintenance logs and work order systems
- On-site evaluations by maintenance and custodial staff
- Consultant or contractor reports on specific systems (roofing, mechanical, electrical, etc.)
- Historical records of prior modernization and renovation work

When combined with broader facility condition assessments (FCAs), the deferred maintenance plan provides valuable insight into the overall health of the LEA's facilities portfolio and can serve as a bridge between day-to-day maintenance and long-range capital planning.

The CDE does not certify or review deferred maintenance plans. For detailed requirements to ensure eligibility for SFP funding, LEAs should refer to current OPSC guidance.

Note for Small School Districts:

Smaller LEAs can develop a simple but effective deferred maintenance plan using information already available locally. Maintenance staff can identify issues through regular inspections, document them in a spreadsheet or table, and estimate repair costs over a multi-year period. Photos, brief descriptions, and priority rankings can help create a clear, practical roadmap for addressing facility needs.

Conclusion

These supplemental elements, while required under Proposition 2 for SFP funding, are not standard components of most facilities master plans. CDE provides this overview as a courtesy to help LEAs understand their broader facilities planning responsibilities. LEAs should always consult OPSC for authoritative information, timelines, and instructions regarding Proposition 2 compliance.

Incorporating accurate maintenance and fiscal data into the overall planning process remains a best practice for all LEAs. Doing so supports long-term sustainability, transparency, and informed decision-making about the stewardship of school facilities.

Facilities Master Planning Resources

California Office of Public School Construction Resources

[School Facility Master Plans](#): Stakeholders can obtain information on the five-year school facilities master plans (FMP) that are required to be submitted for participation in the School Facilities Program.

[OPSC School Facility Program Guidelines for the Five-Year School Facilities Master Plan](#)

[Facility Inspection Tool \(FIT\) Excel Version](#)

[Facility Inspection Tool \(PDF\)](#)

[OPSC Enrollment Projection Calculator](#)

Climate Ready Schools Coalition Recommended Resources

Proposition 2 Implementation Guidance from Climate Ready Schools Coalition Partners. [Climate Adaptation and Resilience at California's K–12 Schools: Actions and Recommendations for State and District Leadership](#) provides specific recommendations to district leaders to address climate impacts in school building and ground design.

[CA Data Initiative for Environmental and Climate Action in TK–12 Schools](#) provides localized data to allow district leaders to better understand and plan for environmental and climate-related data projections over the course of four decades.

[HVAC Choices for Student Health and Learning](#) provides district leaders with specific recommendations in selecting HVAC systems that advance student health and safety.

The [Decarbonization Roadmap for School Building Decision Makers](#) website from the New Buildings Institute (NBI) provides guidance, templates, and tools for school leaders to pursue healthy, efficient, carbon neutral school design, construction, and operation.

A review of [projected impacts of climate change](#) over the next twenty years.

[*Protecting Californians from Extreme Heat: A State Action Plan to Build Community Resilience.*](#)

Ten Strands, in partnership with the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) and UndauntedK12 developed a [Climate Resilience and Adaptation Toolkit for Local Education Agencies](#).

Facilities Master Plan Exemplars

The following FMPs provide examples for local educational agencies to review. The list of exemplars does not reflect any priority or imply endorsement from the California Department of Education (CDE). The following FMPs offer examples of comprehensive facilities master plans in a variety of school settings.

California Green Ribbon Schools Awards Facilities Master Plan Exemplars

[Pittsburg Unified School District Facilities Master Plan](#), 2021.

[Laguna Beach Unified School District Facilities Master Plan](#), Revised 2023.

[Rialto Unified School District 2022-23 Facilities Master Plan](#)

Leroy F. Greene Design and Planning Awards Exemplars

2025 Awards

[2024 San Juan Unified School District Master Planning Award of Excellence](#)

[2024-25 San Juan Unified School District Facilities Master Plan](#)

2023 Awards

[Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District: John Adams Middle School Campus, Master Planning Award of Honor.](#)

John Adams Middle School Campus Master Plan, 2020

[John Adams Middle School Master Planning Award of Honor](#)

2022 Awards

Sacramento Unified School District: Equity Based Facility Master Plan, [Master Planning Award of Excellence](#).

[Sacramento City Unified School District Equity Master Plan](#)

Additional School Facilities Master Planning Guidance

[PK-12 Public Educational Facilities Master Plan Guide 2023](#), 21st Century School Fund.

[National Council on School Facilities \(NCSF\) Facilities Planning Videos](#)

School Facilities Research

Studies show that quality school buildings and learning environments are correlated with positive student outcomes. The CDE School Facilities and Transportation Services Division provides summaries of school facilities research and best practices and resources that can assist schools throughout the school facilities planning, design, and implementation process.

[CDE School Facilities Research Summaries](#)

[CDE School Facilities Best Practices and Resources Topics and Fact Sheets](#)

[CDE School Facilities Reference Library](#)

Additional Sources for School Facilities Research

[National Center on School Infrastructure](#)

[National Council on School Facilities](#)

[Publications from The Center for Cities and Schools at University of California Berkeley](#)

[21st Century School Fund Publications](#)

Key Laws, Regulations, and Standards

[OPSC Proposition 2 Assembly Bill 247 Implementation Information](#)

[AB-247 Education finance: school facilities: Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Schools and Local Community College Public Education Facilities Modernization, Repair, and Safety Bond Act of 2024](#)

[Title 5, California Code of Regulations](#)

[California Building Standards Code, Department of General Services \(DGS\)](#)

[School Site and Plan Approval Forms, California School Facilities Planning Division \(SFPD\)](#)

Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)

[Resources to support the planning, implementation and evaluation of an LCAP.](#)

[Local Control Funding Formula \(LCFF\) Resources: Priority 1 Basic Services.](#) Click the drop-down arrow for resources that support school facilities that are maintained in good repair.

[LCFF Priority 1 Statement of Model Practices: Facilities](#)

[LCFF Priorities/ Whole Child Resources Map](#)

Green Building Standards

[Collaborative for High Performance Schools \(CHPS\)](#)

[Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design \(LEED\)](#)