

**SYSTEM FOR  
RATING  
PROPOSED SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

**Adopted By:**  
The State Board of  
Education on  
September 20, 2005

## **The System For Rating Proposed School Construction Projects**

is used to establish funding priority for major projects such as new schools and addition/renovation projects.

Department of Education staff will visit and score existing facilities following the submission of a completed preliminary application form, including enrollment projections, existing floor plans, and a facility analysis prepared by a qualified professional. Needs and deficiencies of existing facilities are the bases for scoring .

The maximum available score is 140. A high score means a higher placement on the State Board’s prioritized list for school construction aid. Using the facility analysis, points will be assigned to rated criteria as follows:

### **Point System for Rating**

The following points will be applied to components based on a current facility analysis and a site inspection.

- 0- Excellent: Conditions ideal or comparable to new. A zero score may also indicate no information was provided on which to score.
- 1- Good: Adequate for programs, services, enrollment. Condition suggests reasonable useful life remaining.
- 2- Fair: Demonstrating signs of need. Shows wear. Component may be nearing the end of its useful life.
- 3- Poor: Demonstrating problems. Needs repair. Has exceeded its expected useful life. Non-compliant with current life safety codes.
- 4- Unsatisfactory: Inadequate for programs, services, enrollment. Code violation. Lack of action poses a threat to the health and safety of students.

The following points will be applied for overcrowded conditions based upon enrollment projections, current enrollment, and building capacity.

- 0- Enrollment is not projected to reach or exceed building capacity or available space.
- 5- Enrollment is projected to reach or exceed capacity within ten years.
- 10 to 20- Enrollment is at or above student capacity for facility and is not projected to decline significantly.

## **DEFINITIONS OF CRITERIA**

### **Health and Safety:**

The purpose of this section is to assess the degree to which students and staff are exposed to hazards and potential threats to physical well-being.

### **Structure / Infrastructure:**

The overall condition of the physical plant will be rated according to the needs and deficiencies of building systems.

### **Adequacy of Facilities:**

The existence and condition of specific facilities and their ability to provide an appropriate learning environment will be rated according to the impact of deficiencies on the educational program.

### **Individual Program Areas:**

The evaluation under this component is based upon the availability of educational space to meet the needs of the curriculum and of required programs and services. Core facilities include library, cafeteria, gymnasium, storage areas, health services, art and music rooms, science labs, and administration areas.

### **Enrollment Versus Capacity:**

Points in this component are based upon evidence that current space available for general classroom use is insufficient to accommodate enrollments. The department will compare current enrollment, projected enrollment, and the capacity of the existing building.

If the student capacity of a building has been determined by the department within the previous eight years, and no major construction has taken place in the interim, the capacity on record will stand unless otherwise determined by the commissioner.

For purposes of determining the capacity of an existing building, the department will divide total classroom space square footage by 30 square feet. Classrooms available for use by pre-K through grade 6 will be taken at no more than thirty students per undivided room. Allowances may be made for spaces not provided, such as library or arts, as determined by the commissioner.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Voter-approved school construction for school districts which do not currently operate a school but who propose to build or purchase a building for the purposes of housing a public school will be ranked by the State Board of Education based upon a determination of the immediacy of the district's need. Consideration will be given to such factors as the economic and geographic ramifications of tuition options and the district's long term plan for educating its students.

The school board is responsible for notifying the evaluator of any changes in local conditions not reflected in the facility analysis.

The following steps shall be used by the department to break ties that occur during the ranking process for the purpose of placing the projects on the annual prioritized list.

- A. The project with more points in section 1, Health and Safety, shall be placed first.
- B. If a tie still exists, the project benefiting the larger number of students shall be placed first.

#### **Appeal process:**

If a school board wishes to appeal its rating score, a written request for administrative review shall be made to the commissioner within 30 days of receipt of the rating. Specific evidence must be included to justify the adjustment of a score for each component being appealed.

#### **Performance contracting:**

School construction projects being completed using an energy service company, known as a performance contract, will be rated on facility deficiencies using the same criteria for rating as other projects. In accordance with 16 VSA 3448f, such projects will be ranked in priority order on a separate list annually.

The prioritized list for aid for projects utilizing performance contracting shall be ranked below other school construction projects ranked in the same year. State aid for performance contracting projects for a given year will be funded after all other prioritized projects for that same given year are funded.

### Funding delays / Insufficient Appropriation:

In the event annual appropriations are insufficient to pay all state aid for eligible prioritized projects in a given year, state aid obligations remaining for that year will be paid in full before funds are distributed to prioritized projects for a subsequent year.

Upon completion of construction and until state aid is paid, school districts, including technical education centers, are eligible to deduct the interest expense attributable to borrowing in anticipation of state aid from education spending for purposes of determining the homestead tax rate.

### Technical Education Centers

Projects to improve facilities for technical education centers will be rated on facility deficiencies using the same criteria as other projects.

A separate prioritized list for technical education center projects will be established annually, incorporating all projects with unfunded state aid obligations.

Subject to funds availability, the State Board of Education urges the general assembly to direct, each year, a minimum of ten percent of the total technical education center state aid obligation, or \$5 million, whichever is greater, toward payment of the technical center construction obligation until it is fully paid.



**VERMONT DEPT OF EDUCATION  
BUILDING EVALUATION FORM**

**DATE OF EVALUATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grades served:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluator:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Scoring:*

-0- *Excellent:* Conditions ideal or comparable to new. A zero may also indicate no information was provided on which to score.  
 -1- *Good:* Adequate for programs, services, enrollment. Condition suggests reasonable useful life remaining.  
 -2- *Fair:* Demonstrating signs of need. Shows wear. Component may be nearing the end of its useful life.  
 -3- *Poor:* Demonstrating problems. Needs repair. Has exceeded its expected useful life. Non-compliant with current life safety codes.  
 -4- *Unsatisfactory:* Inadequate for programs, services, enrollment. Code violation. Lack of action poses a threat to the health and safety of students.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unsatis- factory	TOTAL SCORE
Value:	0	1	2	3	4	

**CRITERIA**

**1. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The degree to which students and staff are exposed to hazards and potential threats to physical well-being.

<b>Site (max 12 pts)</b>						-
Vehicular traffic and circulation						-
Water and Septic						-
Physical Education						-
Other:						-
<b>Building (max 20 pts)</b>						-
Handicapped Access						-
Security and Egress						-
Fire Protection / Life Safety codes						-
Air Quality						-
Asbestos / Lead / Hazardous substances						-
Other:						-

**2. GENERAL BLDG. CONDITIONS**

The overall condition of the physical plant; the needs and deficiencies of existing building systems.

<b>Structure / Infrastructure (max 28 pts)</b>						-
Ventilation						-
Heating						-
Electrical / Lighting						-
Flooring and Finishes						-
Roof						-
Thermal Envelope and Windows						-
Acoustics						-
Other:						-

<b>5. Consolidation or District Formation</b>	5.1 buildings & programs district formation & cost effective	A single school district that proposes a consolidation of one or more buildings, or like programs and services, and demonstrates cost effectiveness will receive 10 points.	
<b>6. Community Use</b>	6.1 educational program incorporates approved community plan and use of building(s).	Any approved educational specification that includes implementation of a community use program that supports the educational program will receive 2 points.	
<b>7. Years in Process</b>	7.1 pre-approved projects waiting in the priority system	For each year a pre-approved project with an established urgent need is unfunded, the Department of Education will add five additional points to its rating.	
<b>8. Identified Schools</b>	8.1 Identified by DOE for technical assistance	Schools qualifying for technical assistance and demonstrating a link between the facility and school performance will receive 10 points.	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>			

**GENERAL COMMENTS:**