

FACILITIES NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

(A New Requirement for Preliminary Submissions involving New Educational Space)

June 20, 1998

The Office of Facilities Planning has streamlined certain procedures in order to shorten the time for review and approval of projects. When a school district is proposing to create additional educational space in the form of a new school building or an addition to an existing building, a preliminary submission is required. The requirements for a preliminary submission of such a project remain the same **except** for the requirement for submitting an updated copy of the district's Long Range Facilities Plan and Educational Specifications. (Please note that in compliance with Section 155.1 of the Commissioner's Regulations, the district must still maintain this Long Range Plan and update it annually.)

The Long Range Plan (LRP) is a multipurpose document that has proven to be a valuable tool for districts to use in planning for the future by assessing enrollment projections, evaluating the district's grade organization, reviewing the use of existing buildings, evaluating the need for replacing obsolete and/or aging facilities, and determining the need for additional facilities.

When a district decides to add new or expand existing educational facilities, it is incumbent upon the district to justify the proposed new educational space. There are two major reasons for adding new educational space: 1) increasing enrollments, and/or 2) expansion of educational programs. The LRP includes enrollment projections. These projections often appear to indicate that new educational space is required but are not always a sufficient factor to justify such additional educational space.

It has become increasingly evident that the LRP is an important document in determining the need for additional space, but at times additional information is needed to justify an addition or new building. The Office of Facilities Planning will now require districts to include a FACILITIES NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY as part of the preliminary submission in lieu of the LRP itself. The format for the FACILITIES NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY is as follows:

1. Will be in narrative form.
2. Should be no longer than 3-5 pages.
3. Will include enrollment projections and clearly describe the impact of those projections on the need for new space.
4. Will clearly explain how program changes will impact the need for new space.
5. Will explain how Special Education Program needs will impact the proposed project.

Please note that there is no actual form for this document--simply follow the requirements outlined above. If additional spaces are not justified in the FACILITIES NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY, they will not be eligible for Building Aid. The district must be able to clearly explain the need for any proposed new space. Furthermore, although we are no longer requiring that a copy of the LRP be submitted as part of the preliminary submissions, the Project Manager may, at his/her discretion, request that a copy of the entire LRP be submitted along with the SUMMARY.