

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Adequate & Equitable U.S. PK-12 Infrastructure

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR SYSTEMIC REFORM

*A report from the Planning for PK-12
School Infrastructure National Initiative*



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

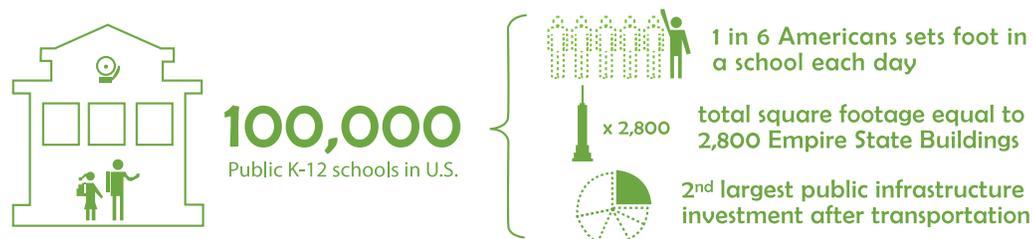
America's PK-12 School Infrastructure Crisis

Our country's elementary and secondary (PK-12) public school infrastructure is in crisis. Every day, millions of children in the U.S. attend public school in unhealthy, unsafe, educationally inadequate, environmentally unsustainable, and financially inefficient facilities. Deteriorated and neglected public school facilities can be found throughout the nation, but the most egregious school facility conditions are in low-wealth school districts and in neighborhoods serving children from low-income families.

The Power of Public Place: PK-12 School Facilities Infrastructure

Nearly 50 million children and another 6 million teachers and other adults — 1/6th of the U.S. population — are in public school buildings every school day. Our public school facilities have broad impacts on children and communities: student, staff, and community health; school quality and academic achievement; economic development; and environment and natural resources. Just as roads and bridges are necessary for mobility, school buildings and grounds are necessary for education. Both transportation and education infrastructures are vital to our democracy and cornerstones of economic strength. We need effective and efficient systems to ensure responsible stewardship of our PK-12 public school infrastructure.

Because of the scale of our public education infrastructure and their broad impacts, America experiences enormous consequences for the deficiencies and disparities in school facility conditions.



The crisis of public school facilities inadequacy and inequity is caused by structural limitations in our underlying political and administrative systems for facilities stewardship. The facilities policies, practices, and funding of local, state, and federal authorities are outdated and underdeveloped. To ensure all school districts can provide adequate and equitable public school facilities, they need modern PK-12 facilities systems. The six basic elements of modern and effective public PK-12 facilities systems are: governance and decision making, funding, management, planning, data and information, and accountability.



The priority actions identified through our national planning process are designed to develop and support the essentials for modern PK-12 public infrastructure stewardship.

P4si Initiative: A National Partnership for Systemic Reform

With much at stake, national leaders came together to formulate a *systems-based* plan to address the PK-12 infrastructure crisis. The 21st Century School Fund (21CSF) and the University of California-Berkeley's Center for Cities + Schools (CC+S), in partnership with the National Council on School Facilities and the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council, launched the *Planning for PK-12 Infrastructure Initiative* (P4si Initiative) in 2016.



Civic



Governmental



Building Industry



Public Finance



Labor



University

In Phase 1 of the P4si Initiative (Fall 2016), a research team from 21CSF and CC+S facilitated a structured national engagement process to identify the challenges to adequacy and equity in PK-12 infrastructure and to propose system reforms. Our process garnered input from 85 leaders from 33 states and the District of Columbia who represented a diverse group of non-profit advocacy leaders, local and state officials, researchers, building industry professionals, labor advocates, and finance experts.

Priority Actions for Systemic PK-12 Infrastructure Reform

There are 55 priority actions identified to address the systemic problems of delivering adequate and equitable public school facilities. These priority actions will support the essentials of a comprehensive local, state, and federal system for adequate and equitable PK-12 infrastructure. They were synthesized and selected from 200 solution ideas generated through our process and are considered to have the greatest potential for development, replication, and scaling.

P4si Initiative Phase 2: Implementing Systemic Reforms

Phase 2 of the P4si Initiative will move the 55 priority actions forward to achieve a paradigm shift in our PK-12 public infrastructure systems. We are working to secure public and private investments to advance the systems reforms identified in these priority actions. This is ambitious work. However, we have seen that when there is a shared responsibility for adequacy and equity amongst the civic, government, and private sectors, our public school places can be transformative. And only with this joint responsibility for facilities that promote the educational success of our children, can our communities ultimately thrive.



Convene
leaders



Define
problems



Identify
impacts



Theorize
causes



Generate solution
ideas



Prioritize
actions

Essentials for Modern PK-12 Public Infrastructure Stewardship

Governance and decision making

- Well-developed codes, policies, and regulations that articulate and designate the local, state, and federal roles and responsibilities for PK-12 facilities
 - Defined and transparent systems for public reviews and approvals
 - Compensatory systems for allocating facilities funding to low-wealth and disenfranchised communities
-

Facilities funding

- Dedicated, stable, and adequate revenues for capital funding
 - Dedicated, stable, and adequate operating funding for facilities operations, maintenance and repairs
 - The capacity and authority to leverage public assets and private equity to generate new capital for local district facilities
 - Low cost credit and reasonable fees for local district borrowing
 - State and federal capital funds to supplement local effort and need
-

Facilities management

- Adequate funding with clear priorities
 - Local school district and state government mission statements and strategic plans that include school facilities
 - Well trained and experienced facility managers and labor personnel, with adequate compensation
 - Technology tools that support facilities management and maintenance functions
 - Systems and protocols for open communication between the many stakeholders associated with and affected by school facilities
-

Facilities planning

- Robust public engagement
 - Mandates, standards, guidance, and funding for regular operations, maintenance, capital, and educational facilities master planning
 - Training and support of district staff for effectively engaging a broad set of local stakeholders
 - School district authority, requirements, and resources for planning across other affected public agencies, regions, and sectors
-

Data and information

- Standardized and relevant facilities data collection at federal, state, and local levels
 - Public access to facilities data and information
 - Timely analysis of facilities data and information to inform decisions
 - Integration of facilities data and information with other school, community, and fiscal data and information
-

Facilities accountability

- Standards for facility planning, management, and equity
 - Standards for design, condition, utilization, and location of public school facilities
 - Meaningful metrics that can be used for comparisons across schools, districts, and states
 - Consequences for school districts whose facilities management practices result in unhealthy and/or unsafe conditions for occupants
 - Consequences for school districts and contractors whose practices contribute to waste, fraud, or abuse of public funds
-

55 Priority Actions For Systemic Reform

GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

1. Establish local education and municipal policies to ensure effective delivery of public school facilities
2. Establish a facilities office in each state department of education or as an independent state agency
3. Guide state facilities decisions with an independent advisory committee
4. Provide state financial, technical, and training assistance to local school districts
5. Establish state policies to support local government inter-agency capital planning and development
6. Develop model legal contracts for innovative PK-12 infrastructure partnerships
7. Establish a facilities office in the U.S. Department of Education, with a strategic national focus on equity
8. Support PK-12 facilities research, guidance and technical assistance in all relevant federal agencies
9. Establish local policies to guide fair and efficient facilities decision-making and approval processes

OPERATING AND CAPITAL FACILITIES FUNDING

10. Create and maintain a dedicated maintenance fund for routine and preventive maintenance
11. Incorporate better systems for using “pay-as-you-go” funding for capital renewals
12. Reduce state legal barriers that limit local school districts from raising local revenue
13. Enact state legislation to provide school districts the flexibility to raise revenue from sources other than property tax
14. Establish dedicated state revenue streams for repayment of PK-12 capital improvement bonds
15. Facilitate partnerships between school districts and community colleges and universities
16. Establish a federal-state partnership with a PK-12 infrastructure “revolving fund”
17. Ensure Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) permits states the flexibility to allow and regulate local district securitization of up to 10% of their federal Title I Funds for major repairs
18. Incorporate public school infrastructure in any federal infrastructure initiative
19. Establish federal programs to fund states for capital construction for PK-12 infrastructure

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

20. Incorporate the values and vision for adequate and equitable school buildings and grounds into the school district’s mission, vision, and strategic plans
21. Establish regular lines of communication between school district program/curriculum staff and facilities staff
22. Provide relevant building condition system data to facilities maintenance and operations personnel
23. Establish a regular maintenance and operations reporting system for facilities personnel
24. Provide adequate staff training and ongoing technical support for facilities staff
25. Develop facility lifecycle costing templates, methods, and standards for school district management
26. Adopt standard processes for capital project management that is documented in a procedures guide
27. Establish a clear 1-2 page “project charter agreement” for every capital project
28. Require a web-based project management information system
29. Conduct facilities workshops for parents and community members about facilities planning and decision making
30. Adequately staff state facilities offices for their data management, planning, technical assistance, and oversight responsibilities

FACILITIES PLANNING

31. Require every district to have an up-to-date five-year master facilities plan guided by public engagement and available online
32. Include school district facilities master plan requirements for the outdoor space on school campuses
33. Establish a school district facilities planning office or designee responsible for community and school engagement
34. Prepare annual districtwide maintenance, repair, and energy management plans and schedules
35. Coordinate school district and school specific facility capital and maintenance plans
36. Define and disseminate benchmarks for local PK–12 facilities planning
37. Provide technical assistance and tools for school districts on community and civic engagement best practices

DATA AND INFORMATION

38. Train and educate school administrators, school boards, and other stakeholders on the importance of facility planning
39. Require local, state, and federal facility data collection and sharing
40. Structure school district facility information systems to facilitate the aggregation and use of cross-functional data
41. Structure school district facility data systems to link to other local government data systems
42. Maintain a publicly accessible state facilities inventory of school district buildings, grounds, and other district owned land or facilities
43. Include basic data on public school facilities in the Common Core of Data of the National Center for Education Statistics
44. Use software tools and services that facilitate data collection, aggregation, and sharing
45. Build a shared and open data portal of facilities research, information, data, and case studies
46. Conduct a national “state of the field” analysis of local and state data collection on PK–12 facilities

ACCOUNTABILITY

47. Establish standards for decision making on school facilities plans and projects
48. Adopt design and building performance standards and performance indicators
49. Conduct regular statewide assessments of PK–12 school facilities
50. Require third party commissioning of new schools and newly renovated building systems
51. Conduct regular inspections of school facilities for health and safety
52. Conduct process, budget, and quality monitoring and audits of school construction, major renovation and systems renewal projects
53. Share school-level facilities data and assessment findings in real time with school-level staff
54. Develop a Facility Quality Index that utilizes facilities data and school and education data
55. Translate building industry and academic research for facilities practitioners

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: The leadership team would like to thank the many state facilities officials and individuals from across the country who contributed their time and insights to this process. We also appreciate the financial support provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Suggested Citation: Filardo, Mary and Jeffrey M. Vincent. 2017. Adequate & Equitable U.S. PK–12 Infrastructure: Priority Actions for Systemic Reform. Washington, D.C.: 21st Century School Fund, Center for Cities + Schools, National Council on School Facilities, and Center for Green Schools.

Cover images: Shutterstock; Jerry Roseman; Shutterstock