

Better Buildings: Better Schools Issue #74, Summer Edition 2016



IMPROVING URBAN PUBLIC
SCHOOL FACILITIES

News and commentary on public school facilities from the local and national perspectives of the 21st Century School Fund. 21CSF is a Washington, D.C. based nonprofit building the public will and capacity to improve public school facilities.

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21st Century School Fund Launches Blog

[The 21CSF Better Buildings: Better Schools blog](#) features posts on national and D.C. local public school facilities, including on policy, best practices, advocacy, opinions, trends, and research. To post a guest article on a topic related to K-12 public school facilities, please email us at info@21csf.org.

National Planning for PK-12 Infrastructure

The 21st Century School Fund and the Center for Cities + Schools at the University of California, Berkeley, in partnership with the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council and the National Council on School Facilities, have launched a national initiative to find solutions to the equity and adequacy gaps highlighted in their recent [State of Our Schools 2016](#) and [Going it Alone](#) reports. Civic, governmental, industry, labor, public finance and university leaders are developing a menu of systemic reforms and innovations that are both game-changing and incremental solutions for the status quo problems of school facilities. [Learn more about the initiative.](#)

Best-Practice Video: Energy and Environmental-Management Planning for School Districts

In partnership with the Education Facilities Clearinghouse and the National Council on School Facilities, the 21st Century School Fund has released a best-practice [video on energy and environmental-management planning for school districts](#). Bob Gorrell, the Director of the New Mexico Public School Facilities Authority and a past president of the National Council on School Facilities, describes:

- What an energy & environmental-management plan is;
- Why every school district needs a plan;
- What goes into a plan; and
- How to develop a well-supported plan.

See the full 7-part K-12 school facilities planning [best-practice video series](#) at the Education Facilities Clearinghouse.

Chicago Public Schools Releases a Draft Educational Facilities Master Plan

On July 1, 2016, Chicago Public Schools released a [preliminary draft](#) of the legislatively mandated educational facilities master plan. Areas of key progress completed or underway were identified as:

- High Speed Broadband and Wi-Fi in Every Classroom
- Air Conditioning Every Classroom

- Elementary School Playground Access and Renovations
- Addressing High Priority Repairs: \$640 million in deferred maintenance and \$3.1 billion in assessed need
- Reducing Overcrowding
- Expanding Full Day Pre-K
- Improving Access to High Quality Education Options, such as IB, STEM, CTE and fine arts programs

District of Columbia Capital Spending for Public School Facilities 1998 to 2021

21CSF worked with [Code for DC](#) to visualize the history of planned and historic capital spending and authorization for DCPS and public charter school facilities at [ForGenerationstoCome.org](#). Code for DC volunteers managed data compilation and created the visualization of these critical civic investments. The data used in the visualization are available at the [21CSF Data Shop](#).

One finding from the data visualization project is that the District of Columbia's \$3.7 billion initiative to modernize all DCPS school buildings, which began in the late 1990s, has not equitably allocated its school construction funding. Schools in more affluent areas have had far greater investment than those in less economically privileged neighborhoods.

The inequity in D.C.'s allocation of capital spending is illustrated below. The clusters of schools within the high school zones with the lowest percentage of at risk students had the highest levels of capital spending on a per student and on a gross square feet (GSF) basis for their combined elementary, middle, and high schools.

Budgeted Capital Funding 1998-2021 by DCPS High School Feeder Zone

% at risk	15%	24%	43%	46%	56%	56%	63%	76%	78%	81%
	Wilson HS Zone	Selective Schools ¹	Eastern HS Zone	Cardozo HS Zone	Coolidge HS Zone	Roosevelt HS Zone	Dunbar HS Zone	Woodson HS Zone	Anacostia HS Zone	Ballou HS Zone
per stu	\$80,828	\$107,561	\$47,441	\$69,777	\$62,527	\$77,276	\$61,864	\$41,656	\$57,453	\$46,988
per GSF	\$469	\$420	\$241	\$300	\$318	\$369	\$340	\$219	\$278	\$227

1 - Citywide schools with no attendance or feeder boundaries.

Capital Planning Legislation is Introduced for the District of Columbia

District of Columbia Council Education Committee Chairman, David Grosso, proposed amending the [School Based Budgeting and Accountability Act of 1998](#) to change how DCPS school modernizations are planned, scheduled and budgeted, introducing the "Planning Actively for Comprehensive Education Facilities Amendment Act of 2016" ([Legislation B21-0777](#)).

The proposed legislation provides defined criteria to the annual prioritization of the six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP outlines the broad schedule and budget for individual school modernization and other construction projects. This is an effort to more objectively select schools to be modernized by comparing the needs of individual schools by means of weighted criteria.

The bill also calls for Master Facilities Plans every 10 years rather than every 5 years and requires MFP updates every 2 years rather than annually. It requires charter school local education agencies to submit standard data about facilities to the Deputy Mayor on Education on a regular basis in order to make it possible for the city to plan for K-12 education citywide.

D.C. Auditor Releases Report on D.C. Performing Arts High School Modernization

On May 31, 2016, the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor [released a report](#) on the D.C. Department of General Services management of the modernization of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts -- a citywide selective public high school for 600 performing arts students. The Auditor found that the cost of the modernization project grew from \$71 million to \$178 million without a comprehensive review by the D.C. Council -- the decision making body responsible for capital appropriations. "As is the case with other schools undergoing modernization, the budget for Ellington has more than doubled since it was proposed in the FY

2012 Capital Improvement Program," D.C. Auditor Kathy Patterson said. Some of the factors that caused the budget increases included, location, underground parking, and an unusually high square footage per student.

"The bottom line is that our school modernization program has had little discipline to date," Patterson said. "We don't use competition to help control costs, for example. There was no hard-dollar bid for the work on Ellington and, in fact, we don't yet have a final construction price - and demolition began more than a year ago."



Concept Design, 12-19-2013, Cox, Graae + Spack Architects

To address that shortcoming, the report recommends that the District return to a traditional "design, bid, build" procurement process based on nearly-complete plans followed by competitive bidding on the construction. Other recommendations include:

- Require completed "education specifications" for schools before a project is included in the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Ensure greater transparency in basic decisions such as site selection.
- Use multiple program management firms, instead of a single management contractor for all school construction.
- Consider additional compatible shared uses for the new arts school to obtain more efficient use of the new facility.
- Draft a new comprehensive policies and procedures manual governing capital construction with clear guidelines that are consistent with best practices.

Event: September 22, 2016 EPA Webinar on Indoor Air Quality

On Thurs. Sept. 22, 2016 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. EDT, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will host a webinar on how school district staff can gain buy-in from senior management for a comprehensive indoor air quality management program. This webinar is a continuation of the Indoor Air Quality Knowledge-to-Action Professional Training Webinar Series. [Register](#).

Event: September 24, 2016 Green Apple Day of Service

On Sept. 24, the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council launches the 2016 Green Apple Day of Service. Volunteers come together to work on a variety of projects to improve school facilities. To host your own school-improvement event, join an existing event in your neighborhood, or learn more, go to Greenapple.org. Since 2012, there have been 12,660 projects with over 750,000 volunteers from all 50 U.S. states and 73 countries involved with the Green Apple Day of Service.

School Facilities News from Around the Country

- [CA - Proposition 51: \\$9 billion for school construction and repair](#)
- [NAT - Decades after ban, lead paint lingers](#)
- [NAT - Do kids who grow kale eat kale?](#)
- [NY - DOE's pricey ventures are overcrowding schools despite open seats: report](#)
- [PA - This district may close all of its high schools; it's about much more than money](#)
- [TX - School closures hit black, poor students the hardest](#)

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