In the Recent Past:
- Over the past 20 years, the state has contributed a total of approximately $3.9 billion to help fund 1,315 school construction and renovation projects.
- The state has been able to fund all requests for eligible projects since 1999.
- In the event that state funding is insufficient to meet all school districts’ requests, OSPI has a system to evaluate and prioritize project requests.

In FY 2008-09:
- The state released $351 million for 58 school construction projects in 37 school districts across 16 counties. State funding, with local funding, will support almost 3 million new square feet of construction.
- 72 projects were completed and are now occupied.
- The High-Performance School Buildings Program, designed to increase energy efficiency and improve learning environments, was fully implemented.
- The “2% Maintenance Accounting Rule” was replaced by the Asset Preservation Program.
- In 2008, the Small Repair Grant Program provided $4 million across 48 school districts.
- The Legislature allocated $78.8 million toward skills center projects in the 2007-09 biennium. This includes $9.3 million for minor works projects.
- OSPI initiated a number of studies to evaluate and explore funding, siting, and program management options, in an ongoing effort to better serve Washington students.
- School Facilities & Organization launched a Regional Assistance Center website, to serve as a resource to school districts.

This folio explains how the School Construction Assistance Program works, what types of projects are eligible for funding, and the roles played by the state, school districts, and voters in funding school construction projects.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is the primary agency charged with overseeing public Kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) education in Washington State. OSPI works with the state’s 295 school districts to administer basic education programs and implement education reform.

Within OSPI, School Facilities & Organization administers the K-12 Capital Budget and the School Construction Assistance Program. The School Construction Assistance Program is OSPI’s largest capital program and provides funding assistance for facility planning, new construction, and modernizations. Based on OSPI’s work, the Legislature makes biennial appropriations to release state funds for school construction assistance to school districts.
Q: What is the state’s role in funding school facilities?

A: OSPI’s School Construction Assistance Program operates as a partnership between local school districts and the state to fund construction of new schools and modernize existing facilities. The state contributes some funding, as well as technical assistance in facility planning, construction, and contracting. School districts have primary responsibility for school construction funding, and as the facility owner, are responsible for overseeing all phases of the project.

Q: What types of projects receive funding?

A: New construction projects build new schools to accommodate “unhoused students” in a growing school district. Modernization projects renovate and upgrade existing school facilities. New-in-lieu of modernization projects replace existing buildings with new ones when more cost effective than modernizing.

Q: What project-related costs can be funded through SCAP?

A: The state provides assistance for “instructional space” (see below). Related to instructional space, the following categories of work are eligible for assistance:
- Initial planning activities: “Study and Survey”
- Development of educational specifications
- Architectural and engineering work
- Value engineering work
- Energy conservation reports
- Certain inspections and testing
- Furniture and equipment
- Constructability reviews
- Building commissioning
- Construction management
- Art for public spaces
- Auxiliary facilities, such as stadia and district administrative space, must be funded entirely with local revenues.

Q: How are projects funded?

A: Local funding. To be eligible for state assistance, a school district must demonstrate local support for the proposed project by raising local revenues. General obligation bonds are the primary source of local revenues. School bond measures require a supermajority to pass. Impact fees, when approved by city/county governments with a fee structure, can be assessed on new development projects.

State funding sources. State revenues to fund school projects come from multiple sources, including management of trust lands, the general fund, state-issued general obligation bonds, and a portion of state lottery funds. The composition of total state funding across these sources changes over time, depending on budget decisions by the Governor and the Legislature.

Q: How much does the State contribute?

A: State funding assistance is determined using a funding formula, based on three main factors:

- Eligible Area
- Construction Cost Allocation (CCA)
- Funding Assistance Percentage

Eligible Area = Future Enrollment (# of students) x Per Student Space Allowance minus Current Capacity

Future Enrollment: the projected number of students in either the next three or five years
Per Student Space Allocation: Grades K-6: 90 square feet (sq ft) per student; 7-8: 117 sq ft per student; 9-12: 130 sq ft per student; students with disabilities: 144 sq ft per student. These allocations do not reflect the true per student space needs, which can vary by school and district education standards
Current Capacity: the existing space inventory for the whole district

For modernization projects, instead of Current Capacity, the square footage of “Improved Space” is deducted.

Q: What is the timing for State Funding Assistance?

A: OSPI releases funding commitments for qualifying projects once a year – after July 1st (concurrent with the start of the state’s fiscal year). Projects may be “front funded” or “non-front funded.” Front funded projects may begin construction prior to the state funding release. Districts using front funding must certify to OSPI that they have adequate funding to pay for the entire project in advance of receiving state monies. For non-front funded projects, school districts start construction following the state announcement that the district has secured funding.

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