

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a facility condition assessment?

A facility condition assessment evaluates the general health of physical facilities by identifying and prioritizing deficiencies and forecasting future costs, or “life cycle needs.”

How was assessment data collected and reviewed?

Data was collected using handheld data collect tools by teams of architects, engineers, and specialists in the spring/summer of 2016. Data was reviewed by a quality control team. LEAs were also provided several opportunities from October 2016 through June 2017 to review and provide feedback to fine tune the assessment data.

How were cost estimates determined?

Cost estimates were derived from local cost estimating expertise and informed by industry best practices, historical cost data, and relevance to the Rhode Island region. All costs are based on a replace-in-kind approach, unless the item was not in compliance with national or state regulations or standards. Soft cost multipliers were included to account for typical construction cost factors, such as overhead and profit. All costs estimates are not exhaustive, are for budgetary purposes only, and will vary at the time of construction.

What is a deficiency?

Costs associated with bringing current systems and components back to a functional state as installed, but do not account for additional funds required to change layouts or increase space sizes.

What is Life Cycle Renewal Cost?

Predicts future facility costs based on the expected remaining life of individual building systems. While a particular building component may not require immediate replacement, it is quite possible for it to reach its end of useful life before or during the commencement of a planned capital construction project. This results in additional costs, which must be accounted for in the planning process.

What is a Facility Condition Index?

General indicator of a building’s health derived by dividing the total repair cost for a facility (including site and educational program space needs) by the total replacement cost for the facility. A facility with a higher FCI percentage has more need than one with a lower FCI.

What is a Five-Year Facility Condition Index?

For planning purposes, the total current deficiencies and the first five years of projected life cycle needs were combined to provide an understanding of the current needs of a facility, as well as the projected needs in the near future. This data is calculated by dividing the combined five-year need by the total replacement cost. Costs associated with new construction are not included in this calculation.

What is Five-Year Need?

Combines the current educational program space deficiencies and condition repair costs with the five-year life cycle renewal forecast to indicate total statewide need. These figures exclude any expansion for classroom additions or new construction for additional enrollment growth.

What are enrollment projections/demographics?

Enrollment projections are an analysis that provides an approximation of how students will move through a district in the next five to 10 years. The methodology used for Rhode Island is based on live birth counts and historical enrollment and assumes historic trends will continue into the future.

What is capacity?

The capacity of a school reflects how many students the school's physical facility can effectively serve. There are multiple methodologies that exist to calculate capacity. Our study reviewed three:

- **LEA Reported Capacity:** LEA reported capacities were compiled from the LEA annual asset protection submission to RIDE.
- **Functional Capacity:** An approach based on an inventory of all instructional spaces and their current use. This information was collected as part of the educational program space assessment.
- **Aspirational Capacity:** Capacity calculated based on building size and designed to conform to the RI School Construction Regulations, which outline the gross square feet per student at each school type.

What is utilization?

Utilization is calculated by dividing the current enrollment by the calculated capacity of a facility, so that governing bodies can identify locations where severe under or over utilization exists.

What is an Educational Program Space Assessment?

A standards-based approach that identifies the degree to which a school facility can adequately support the instructional mission and methods, based on the RI School Construction Regulations.

What is a Master Planning?

Master planning is a process that takes into consideration all the available data and information, including: facility condition, educational appropriateness, enrollment projections, and overall educational goals, to provide a comprehensive framework to help schools and districts make smart, sustainable investments. A robust master planning process generally includes involvement from community stakeholders.

What is the goal of the RI Schoolhouse Recommended Action Plan for Consideration?

It provides guidance based on assessment data and industry best practices, in allocating funding to strategically and effectively invest in facilities, and provide opportunities for student learning to occur in healthy, safe environments, while providing the potential for educational spaces to be updated to 21st century learning environments.

What are the Fiscal Strategies?

Fiscal strategies is a section in the RI Recommended Action Plan that provides recommendations on possible financial opportunities the state could seek to improve or increase funding streams, potentially bring more facilities into 21st century learning environments.

What are Focus Programs?

Focus programs are approval categories under the Necessity for School Construction that may be implemented to strategically incentivize LEA facility improvements while controlling costs at the State level. They address the highest priority of the five-year condition need, opportunities for programmatic improvements, and fiscal stewardships, including focus on educational programs, energy efficiency, and technology.

What are Strategic Recommendations?

Provide the State and LEAs guidelines to improve operations of facilities and give guidance for additional processes that will contribute to the overall goals of RIDE. Strategic recommendations include recommendations such as prioritizing school construction projects, creating master price agreements, and establishing a community engagement process.

What's next?

The State and LEAs have the opportunity to engage stakeholders to fund the highest priority construction and renovation projects, provide enhanced learning opportunities, improve energy efficiency, and provide 21st century learning opportunities.