

Ohio

State Roles and Responsibilities for PK-12 Public School Facilities



2025 State Profile



**National Center on
School Infrastructure**



Authors & Acknowledgements

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Disclaimers

This state profile represents our best understanding of state policies, standards, and laws governing public PK-12 educational facilities. Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the authors. This document should not be considered an officially approved statement of state policy.

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**National Center on
School Infrastructure**

The National Center on School Infrastructure is a national resource hub that supports states and school districts in the stewardship of America's elementary and secondary public school facilities.



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OHIO EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides an overview of the state of Ohio's roles and responsibilities regarding public elementary and secondary (PK12) school facilities. It is part of a National Center on School Infrastructure technical assistance project to document public school facility policy and practice across all U.S. states and territories to help build state capacity for aiding districts in their efforts to provide students and staff with healthy, safe, resilient, and educationally adequate public school buildings and grounds.

The governance and management of PK-12 public school facilities are primarily managed at the local level.¹ Local Education Agencies, LEAs, (called districts from henceforth) have the authority and responsibility for the day-to-day operations and maintenance of public school facilities, as well as for long-term planning, design, financing, and construction.

States, however, also assume a range of roles and responsibilities regarding the governance and management of school facilities. These include establishing and implementing state policies and practices to support local PK-12 public school facilities planning, facility data collection, capital and maintenance funding for buildings and grounds, facilities management, and facility standards and implementing systems for accountability.



State agencies may additionally offer technical assistance and training to help districts meet modern facility standards, mitigate risks, and enhance the overall quality of local stewardship for public school buildings and grounds. The extent of state involvement in public school facilities varies widely across states.

¹ This is true in all states, except Hawaii, which is a unitary state and local education agency.



Governance

The Ohio Constitution ([Article VI, Section 2](#)) assigns the General Assembly the responsibility to secure a "thorough and efficient system of common schools." Pursuant to this mandate, the legislature created a structure of state entities with distinct roles in school facility oversight. These include the [Ohio Department of Education and Workforce](#) ([ORC § 3301.07](#)), the [Ohio Facilities Construction Commission](#) ([ORC § 123.20](#)) (OFCC), and legislative committees such as the House and Senate Finance Committees, which review capital appropriations for school construction. The [State Board of Education](#), though largely divested of policymaking authority as of 2023, retains administrative functions related to district boundaries ([ORC § 3311.06](#)). Judicial precedent from *DeRolph v. State* (1997–2002) established that Ohio's school facility funding system was constitutionally deficient, prompting the creation of the Ohio School Facilities Commission, now integrated into OFCC.

Management

Day-to-day facilities management responsibilities lie with local school boards. However, two state-level entities play key management roles. The [Ohio Department of Education and Workforce](#) oversees educational programming, safety policy compliance (e.g., emergency plans per [ORC § 3313.536](#)), and administrative procedures impacting facility use. The [Ohio Facilities Construction Commission](#) (OFCC) administers capital project funding, enforces standards, and provides technical assistance. It oversees district master planning, enrollment projections, maintenance planning ([ORC § 3318.05](#)), and compliance with the [Ohio School Design Manual](#) (OSDM). The OFCC also manages the state's Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS).

Data

The OFCC collects data from districts engaged in capital programs under [ORC Chapter 3318](#). These districts undergo [Facility Condition Assessments](#) and Suitability Appraisals that include systems-level evaluations and cost projections. Ten-year enrollment forecasts are required for planning eligibility. While detailed facility data is not collected statewide, summary-level information is published through the [DataOhio Portal](#), including capital project dashboards and grants data. The Department of Education and Workforce also collects limited facilities-related financial data as part of its standardized reporting systems ([ORC § 3301.12](#)).



Planning

Districts participating in state-funded capital programs must develop a [Master Facilities Plan](#) (MFP) pursuant to [ORC § 3318.02](#). This plan includes enrollment projections, project phasing, site standards, and space adequacy considerations based on the OSDM. Planning determines project eligibility and state-local cost shares. Districts not yet eligible for funding may participate in the Expedited Local Partnership Program ([ORC § 3318.36](#)). OFCC publishes cost policies and planning tools to standardize eligibility, expenditures, and project scope. While planning is locally driven, state approval is required for co-funded capital work.

Funding

Ohio school facilities are funded through both operating and capital budgets. State law ([ORC § 3318.05](#)) mandates maintenance plans and dedicated maintenance funds for districts receiving state capital aid. Capital funding is administered by OFCC through programs such as the [Classroom Facilities Assistance Program](#) (CFAP, [ORC § 3318.03](#)), [Exceptional Needs Program](#) (ENP), and [Vocational Facilities Assistance Program](#) (VFAP). Funding is based on a cost-share formula tied to district wealth ([ORC § 3318.011](#)). Targeted grants support charter schools, Appalachian innovation centers, and school security upgrades. The state provides capital support through general obligation bonds appropriated biennially by the General Assembly.

Accountability

State accountability mechanisms for school facilities include planning, design, building, maintenance, health, and educational adequacy standards. The OFCC enforces construction and design requirements through the Ohio School Design Manual (OSDM), including commissioning ([M130-08](#)), maintenance plan review (PS-03), and CMMS reporting. The Ohio Building Code ([OAC Chapter 4101:1](#)) governs public building safety. The Ohio Department of Health and local health districts conduct semiannual inspections ([ORC § 3707.26](#)) and regulate indoor environmental conditions. Air quality and chemical hazard standards are enforced through OSDM protocols and Ohio Fire Code regulations. Drinking water standards follow Ohio EPA regulations ([OAC Chapter 3745-81](#)). Educational adequacy is embedded in the OSDM guidelines, with additional statutory requirements for specialized programs (e.g., STEM facilities under [ORC § 3318.71](#)).



OHIO ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

Public education is a state responsibility established in the Ohio State Constitution.

[Ohio Article VI Section 2](#)

The General Assembly shall make such provisions, by taxation, or otherwise, as with the income arising from the school trust fund, will secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the state; but no religious or other sect, or sects shall ever have any exclusive right to, or control of, any part of the school funds of this state.

Pursuant to this provision, the General Assembly has enacted laws defining the structure of the public education system, including the creation of state agencies involved in the oversight and funding of public school facilities. These include the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce and the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission, which operate under statutory authority granted by the legislature to support school districts in planning, financing, and constructing school buildings.

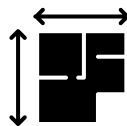
SCALE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL HOUSING



3,660
Schools



1,047
Districts/
Charters



308,870,398
Sq. Ft.
Reported



305,413
Staff



1,671,630
Students

Ohio's 1,047 districts reported to the U.S. Census of Governments that they operated 3,660 PK through 12th grade (and adult education) schools in fiscal year 2022. These districts enroll about 1,671,630 students and are the workplace for about 305,413 staff. These schools encompass about 308,870,398 million gross square feet of building space statewide.



The following sections describe Ohio’s state-level roles and responsibilities for public school facilities.

OHIO PK-12 PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

GOVERNANCE

State-level engagement in PK-12 public school facilities is firmly embedded in state systems. State boards of education, state education agencies, state legislatures, governors, and in some cases, independent commissions and facilities authorities make decisions about state roles and responsibilities associated with the quality and delivery of public school facilities. These bodies govern through state codes, regulations, standards, and budgets, which direct and influence local policies and practices regarding public school buildings and grounds. In some states, education finance equity and adequacy court cases have also played a role in defining state responsibilities for public school facilities.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES AFFECTING FACILITIES

Several committees in the Ohio General Assembly review legislation and budget proposals that impact public school facilities:

- [House Finance Committee](#): Oversees the development of the state operating and capital budgets, including appropriations for public education. The committee reviews proposals related to school construction, renovation, and maintenance.
- [Senate Finance Committee](#): Reviews and approves capital and operating appropriations in the Senate. The committee evaluates funding requests for K–12 education, including capital outlay for public school infrastructure.
- [House Primary and Secondary Education Committee](#): Reviews legislation related to K–12 public education, including matters affecting school buildings, instructional environments, and school safety.



- [Senate Education Committee](#): Considers legislation concerning public education policy and facilities. The committee also holds confirmation hearings for appointments to the Department of Education and Workforce under [ORC § 3301.13](#). Its chair serves as a nonvoting ex officio member of the State Board of Education pursuant to [ORC § 3301.01](#).

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The [Ohio State Board of Education](#) is established under [ORC § 3301.01](#) and is composed of nineteen members: eleven elected and eight appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The chairpersons of the House and Senate education committees serve as nonvoting ex officio members. Elected members are chosen from districts consisting of three contiguous Senate districts, as defined in [ORC § 3301.02](#). If the General Assembly does not enact legislation to establish these districts after each decennial apportionment, the Governor is required to designate them.

As of July 2023, the policymaking authority of the State Board was significantly reduced by [H.B. 33 of the 135th General Assembly](#). Powers previously held by the Board under [ORC § 3301.07](#), including oversight of school facility standards, planning, and funding, were transferred to the Director of Education and Workforce, a cabinet-level appointee reporting to the Governor.

The Board retains specific responsibilities under [ORC § 3311.06](#), including review and approval of school district territory transfer requests, annexation petitions, and the equitable division of funds and indebtedness when boundaries are altered.

OHIO DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

The [Director of Education and Workforce](#) serves as the chief state school officer in Ohio and is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, as established under [ORC § 3301.07\(A\)](#). The position was created by House Bill 33 of the 135th General Assembly, which restructured the state education system by transferring policymaking authority from the State Board of Education to a new cabinet-level Department of Education and Workforce.



Under ORC § 3301.07(D)(3), the Director may adopt standards to promote effective organization, administration, and educational outcomes in school districts. While this authority includes setting expectations that may influence school facility planning and instructional delivery, technical design and construction standards remain under the jurisdiction of the OFCC and the Ohio School Design Manual.

The Director is also authorized under [ORC § 3301.12\(A\)\(2\)](#) to prescribe and enforce standardized reporting forms and accounting procedures, which may include the collection of financial data related to school facility funding and expenditures.

GUBERNATORIAL ROLE IN SCHOOL FACILITIES

The [Governor of Ohio](#) has statutory responsibilities related to school facilities through budget recommendations and executive appointments. Under [ORC § 107.031](#), the Governor is required to include in the biennial executive budget recommendations for appropriations to the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) totaling not less than \$300 million per fiscal year for the construction, acquisition, replacement, reconstruction, or expansion of classroom facilities, as defined in [ORC § 3318.01](#). Additionally, the Governor appoints the Director of Education and Workforce and one administrative department head to serve on the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission, as authorized under [ORC § 3301.07\(A\)](#) and [ORC § 123.20\(A\)](#).

In addition to budgetary and appointment authority, the Governor holds emergency powers that may affect school facilities during declared emergencies. Under [ORC § 5502.21](#), the Governor may direct the state's emergency response through the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, which includes coordinating actions that impact public school infrastructure. While local districts are responsible for developing emergency management plans under [ORC § 5502.262](#), the Governor's office provides oversight and coordination to support continuity of operations and ensure the safety of school buildings during crises.



Ad Hoc COMMITTEES, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS

OHIO SCHOOL FACILITIES COMMISSION (1997-2012)

The Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC) was established in 1997 as a dedicated state agency to administer funding and oversight for public school construction and renovation following the Ohio Supreme Court’s decision in *DeRolph v. State*, 78 Ohio St.3d 193 (1997). The Court found the state’s reliance on local property taxes for school funding unconstitutional and cited unsafe, inadequate school facilities in many districts as a key failure of the system. In response, the General Assembly created the OSFC to initiate a coordinated, statewide capital program that would prioritize funding for low-wealth districts.

The OSFC was tasked with developing project approval procedures, design standards, and cost-sharing formulas to administer the new [Classroom Facilities Assistance Program](#) (CFAP) under [ORC Chapter 3318](#). It also oversaw project reviews, enrollment projections, and long-term maintenance planning for districts participating in state-funded capital improvements. The Commission played a foundational role in establishing the systems and policies still used today by its successor agency, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC).

OHIO PK-12 PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

MANAGEMENT

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have authority and responsibility for the day-to-day operations and maintenance of public school facilities, as well as for long-term facilities planning, design, financing, and construction. Although PK-12 public school facilities are managed locally, there are state facilities management roles and responsibilities that may involve strategic planning, data collection, state funding programs, standards and systems for accountability. State agencies may also include programs for technical assistance and training that help districts meet standards, mitigate risk, and increase the quality of local district stewardship of public school buildings and grounds. State roles and responsibilities related to elementary and secondary public school facilities vary



widely across the U.S. states, with unitary districts in Hawaii and U.S. Territories, where the state agency and the local agency are combined.

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

The [Department of Education and Workforce](#) (DEW) was created by [House Bill 33](#) of the 135th General Assembly and became operational in October 2023, replacing the former Department of Education. The restructuring transferred administrative and policymaking authority from the State Board of Education to a new executive agency under the Governor’s cabinet. This change was enacted to consolidate oversight of K–12 education and workforce development under centralized executive leadership.

DEW is responsible for administering primary, secondary, special, and career-technical education across the state. It is organized into two divisions: the Division of Primary and Secondary Education and the Division of Career-Technical Education, each led by a Deputy Director appointed by the agency’s Director.

Although DEW does not manage school construction or capital projects, it performs several facility-related functions tied to its instructional and administrative oversight role. These include:

- Prescribing standardized data collection and reporting procedures under [ORC § 3301.12](#)(A)(2), including financial data that may relate to school facility operations and expenditures.
- Coordinating with the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) on enrollment projections and educational program specifications that inform the design of school buildings.
- Supporting compliance with Emergency Management Plan requirements under [ORC § 3313.536](#), which relate to the safety and emergency use of school facilities.
- Adopting administrative standards under [ORC § 3301.07](#)(D)(3) that affect school district organization and management, including policies that may influence the use or configuration of instructional space.



These responsibilities position DEW as a coordinating and advisory agency in school facility matters where instructional programming, safety, and administrative compliance intersect with physical infrastructure.

OHIO FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION COMMISSION

The [Ohio Facilities Construction Commission](#) (OFCC) was established in 2012 through the merger of the former Ohio School Facilities Commission and the Office of the State Architect, and is authorized under [ORC § 123.20](#). The Commission is responsible for administering the state's school construction funding programs under [Chapter 3318 of the Ohio Revised Code](#), including the [Classroom Facilities Assistance Program](#) (CFAP), [Expedited Local Partnership Program](#) (ELPP), [Exceptional Needs Program](#) (ENP), and other capital funding initiatives.

Public school districts retain local control over their capital projects and are responsible for hiring construction managers, project managers, or owners' representatives to oversee planning and implementation. The Commission's role is to administer state financial assistance, set design and construction standards, and ensure that participating projects comply with state requirements and performance expectations.

Projects receiving OFCC support are subject to the design criteria and planning guidelines outlined in the [Ohio School Design Manual](#) (OSDM). The Commission reviews and approves district master plans, enrollment projections, and project scopes before entering into formal project agreements that define the terms of state-local cost sharing, long-term maintenance obligations, and allowable expenditures. The OFCC also reviews maintenance plans required under [ORC § 3318.05](#), and provides oversight through periodic audits, site visits, and document review to ensure compliance with policies such as the [M130-08 commissioning scope](#) and the [PS-03 maintenance planning protocol](#).

In addition to oversight, the OFCC provides technical assistance to districts on issues such as design variances, procurement, budgeting, and phasing of large-scale capital projects. It also manages the statewide Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) used by districts to document



preventive maintenance activities and meet ongoing reporting requirements for co-funded facilities.

The Commission is composed of seven members. Three voting members include the Director of the Office of Budget and Management, the Director of the Department of Administrative Services, and one additional administrative department head appointed by the Governor. Four non-voting members are appointed by the leadership of the General Assembly.

OHIO PK — 12 SCHOOL FACILITIES DATA MANAGEMENT

Extensive data and information are needed for educational facility planning, decision making, and oversight. Relevant data helps stakeholders understand the broad impacts of their PK -12 infrastructure spending and investments on health, education, community and beyond. Facilities data falls into five major categories: ([NCES Forum Guide to Facilities Information Management](#)).

Inventory: Data include addresses, geo-codes, building areas, site acreage, and year of construction.

Design: Data include space descriptions, number of stories, designed-for purposes (i.e., elementary school, performance center).

Utilization: Data includes school capacity for enrollment based on the educational programs provided, spaces that are shared, and the gross square footage per enrolled student.

Condition: Data includes facility condition assessment data on the age and condition of major components, systems, and finishes.

Budget and Finance: Data elements include the district expenditures for maintenance, operations, and capital improvements.

Beyond these standard data sets, an increasing amount of data is also being collected and analyzed on building performance. This includes data on building performance metrics for energy efficiency, indoor air quality, lead levels in water, and the presence of hazardous materials like asbestos, mold, or PCBs.

ENROLLMENT DATA

For districts that participate in the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) capital programs, enrollment figures and projections are collected as



part of the project development process. Commission rules require the review of a district's master plan to verify design capacity, and the OFCC may conduct an enrollment projection study. In this process, districts are responsible for submitting recent and projected enrollment data. These requirements are codified in [Ohio Administrative Code 3318:1-5-01](#)(C)–(D).

The Ohio School Design Manual (OSDM) describes in more detail how projections are prepared and applied. Districts must submit ten-year enrollment projections based on demographic trends, live birth counts, housing development, and cohort survival analysis. These projections are compiled for districts entering the state program and maintained in OFCC project files.

Apart from OFCC programs, Ohio maintains statewide enrollment counts through the [Education Management Information System](#) (EMIS). EMIS is the state's integrated education data collection platform, administered by the Department of Education and Workforce. It was established under [Ohio Revised Code § 3301.0714](#) and implemented through [Ohio Administrative Code 3301-14-01](#). EMIS serves as the authoritative source for statewide student enrollment data but is not facility-specific.

INVENTORY DATA

For districts that participate in the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) programs under [Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3318](#), facility inventory information is collected as part of the required [Facility Condition Assessment](#) and Suitability Appraisal. These assessments document building age, gross square footage, number of teaching stations, and site characteristics. Assessment instruments developed under the [Ohio School Design Manual](#) (OSDM) provide the standard format for this data. [Ohio Administrative Code 3318:1-3-01](#)(G) references the OSDM as the guideline for assessment documentation.

[Ohio Revised Code § 3318.02](#) directs the OFCC to periodically perform an assessment of statewide classroom facility needs, and [§ 3318.03](#) authorizes the Commission to examine assessments and master plans prepared by school districts. These statutory provisions provide authority for the collection of facility data related to size, age, and condition, but the data are generated only



when a district enters the OFCC program. There is no statewide dataset of addresses, geo-codes, site acreage, or year of construction maintained on a recurring basis.

DESIGN DATA

Design-related data are collected by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) when districts participate in state capital programs. Under rule, OFCC reviews district master plans to verify programming, grade configurations, and design capacity. These requirements are established in [Ohio Administrative Code 3318:1-5-01](#)(C)–(D).

The [Ohio School Design Manual](#) (OSDM) provides the standard for documenting design capacity and program requirements. District submissions include space descriptions, room counts, grade configurations, and other planning elements. These records are maintained by OFCC as part of the project documentation and are used to determine the scope of work and design compliance for state-funded projects.

UTILIZATION DATA

For districts that participate in the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) capital programs, utilization is calculated as part of the master planning process. Under [Ohio Administrative Code 3318:1-5-01](#), the Commission reviews the district's master plan, verifies design capacity, and may conduct an enrollment projection study. These steps require districts to submit enrollment information, which is then compared to the design capacity standards set in the [Ohio School Design Manual](#) (OSDM).

The resulting utilization figures are documented in OFCC project records and used to determine program eligibility and project scope. There is no separate, recurring collection of utilization data for all school districts outside of the OFCC capital program process.

CONDITION DATA

Facility condition data in Ohio are collected by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) when a district enters the state's capital funding program. At that point, OFCC conducts a standardized [Facility Condition Assessment](#)



(FCA) and a Suitability Appraisal in accordance with the Ohio School Design Manual (OSDM). These assessments document the condition of up to 23 building systems, including roofing, HVAC, plumbing, accessibility, structural components, and fire protection. They also record the age of the building, gross square footage, system deficiencies, and estimated costs for renovation or replacement. The requirement to use OSDM assessment guidelines is referenced in [Ohio Administrative Code 3318:1-3-01](#)(G).

Statute directs the OFCC to periodically perform an assessment of classroom facility needs across the state. [Ohio Revised Code § 3318.02](#) authorizes the Commission to assess statewide needs, and [§ 3318.03](#) provides for the review of assessments and master plans prepared by school districts. Additionally, [Ohio Revised Code § 3318.41](#) requires annual assessments for certain joint vocational school district projects. Condition data collected through these processes are maintained in OFCC project files and internal databases. They are not updated statewide on a recurring basis and exist primarily for districts engaged in the OFCC capital program.

BUDGET AND FINANCE DATA

Budget and finance data related to school facilities in Ohio are collected and maintained by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) in connection with state-funded capital projects. Statute requires the Commission to encumber and disburse state funds for approved projects. Under [Ohio Revised Code § 3318.11](#), OFCC must encumber project funds, and under [§ 3318.12](#), it is responsible for disbursing or transferring those funds according to project agreements. These provisions establish the agency's recordkeeping responsibilities for state financial commitments to school facility projects.

Project-level financial data, including encumbrances, disbursements, and local share requirements, are maintained in OFCC's internal systems and documented through project agreements with districts. These records are not compiled into a comprehensive, public, facility-level financial dataset but are available in agency files for each state-supported project.

OFCC also publishes summary-level financial data through public dashboards on the state's [DataOhio Portal](#). These include the School Facilities Portfolio and

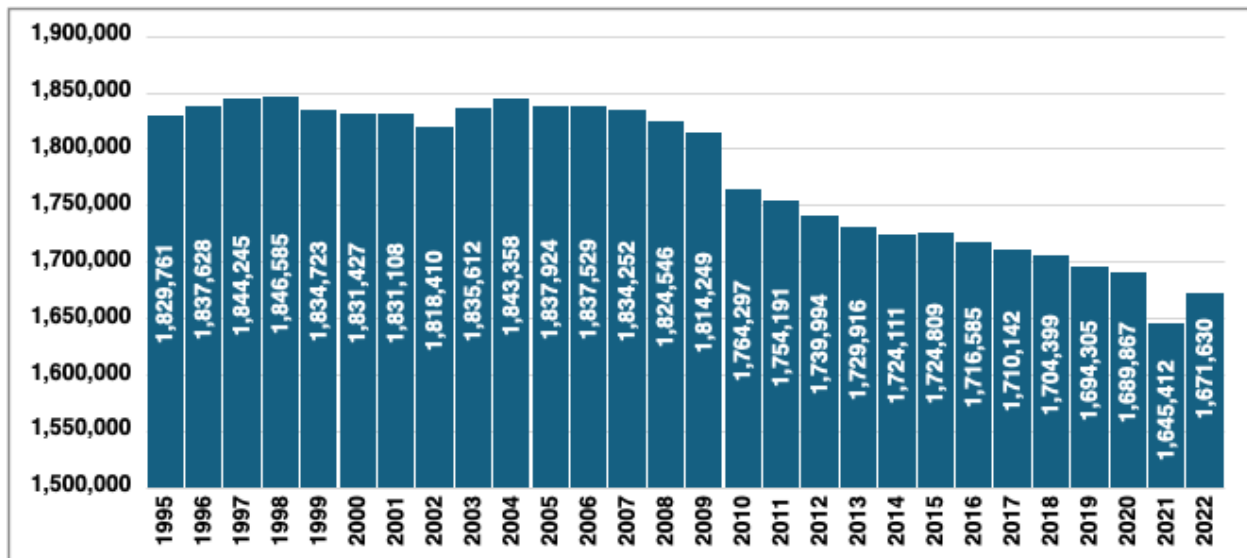


the OFCC Grants Dashboard, which provide information on program awards, project types, and geographic distribution by district, county, and legislative district. The dashboards present aggregated financial data but do not include detailed building-level budget or expenditure records.

OHIO PK — 12 SCHOOL FACILITIES PLANNING

School facilities require planning at many different levels to meet educational and community purposes. Educational facilities planning is needed for facilities operations, maintenance, and capital projects. Planning PK- 12 public school facilities enables states, districts, and communities to align their resources to their needs, ensure that priorities are met fairly, and that facilities are operated, managed, and built to modern health, safety, educational, and environmental standards.

CHART 1: STUDENT ENROLLMENT SCHOOL YEARS 1994-1995 THROUGH 2021-2022



Source: Data from the U.S. Census of Governments Fiscal Survey; www.school-infrastructure.org Data Dashboard, of the National Center on School Infrastructure (NCI).

MAINTENANCE PLANNING

For districts that participate in state-funded facilities programs, the project agreement executed under Chapter 3318 must include a provision requiring the



district to adhere to a facilities maintenance plan approved by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC). This requirement is codified in [Ohio Revised Code § 3318.08\(Q\)](#).

OFCC issues maintenance-plan guidelines and provides the OnTrack online tool to assist districts in preparing and maintaining their Commission-approved plans. These agency resources outline the approval criteria and documentation practices for maintenance planning under state-supported projects.

CAPITAL PLANNING

Capital planning responsibilities in Ohio are tied to participation in the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) programs under [Chapter 3318](#) of the Ohio Revised Code. Statute authorizes the Commission to assess district facility needs and to review any assessments and master plans prepared by districts. Under [Ohio Revised Code § 3318.02](#), the Commission must perform on-site evaluations of classroom facilities needs. [Ohio Revised Code § 3318.03](#) directs the Commission, at the request of a district, to examine district-prepared needs assessments and master plans.

Administrative rules require the Commission to review programming and grade configurations, verify design capacity, and conduct or approve enrollment projections during master plan development. These responsibilities are established in [Ohio Administrative Code 3318:1-5-01](#). The rules also outline circumstances in which variances may be granted for renovation or replacement decisions beyond standard cost thresholds, as referenced in Ohio Administrative Code 3318:1-5-01(D)–(F).

Capital planning under these provisions occurs when districts engage with the OFCC capital program. The Commission’s review and approval of a district’s master plan are prerequisites for determining eligibility, scope, and sequencing of state-supported capital projects.



EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES MASTER PLANNING

Within the state’s capital program, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) reviews any master plan developed by a district to meet its facility needs. [Ohio Revised Code § 3318.03](#) authorizes the Commission, at the request of a district, to examine district-prepared assessments and master plans. This review occurs in the context of determining the scope and sequencing of projects supported through Chapter 3318 programs.

Outside of this process, there is no statutory or regulatory requirement that districts prepare or submit an educational facilities master plan on a recurring basis. Master planning is only formally required when districts engage with OFCC for capital project participation.

OHIO PK-12 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES FUNDING

School facilities are funded with annually budgeted operating funds for utilities, cleaning, groundskeeping, maintenance and repairs; and periodically budgeted, and usually bond financed, capital funds, for school design, construction, renovation and major repair projects. State laws define how districts get access to local financing for school construction capital projects and whether or how states distribute state school construction funding. Federal funding for school construction is minimal—before pandemic funding—it was less than 2% of what districts paid for school construction capital outlay, with a major share of federal funding for rebuilding schools post weather related disasters.

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS FUNDING

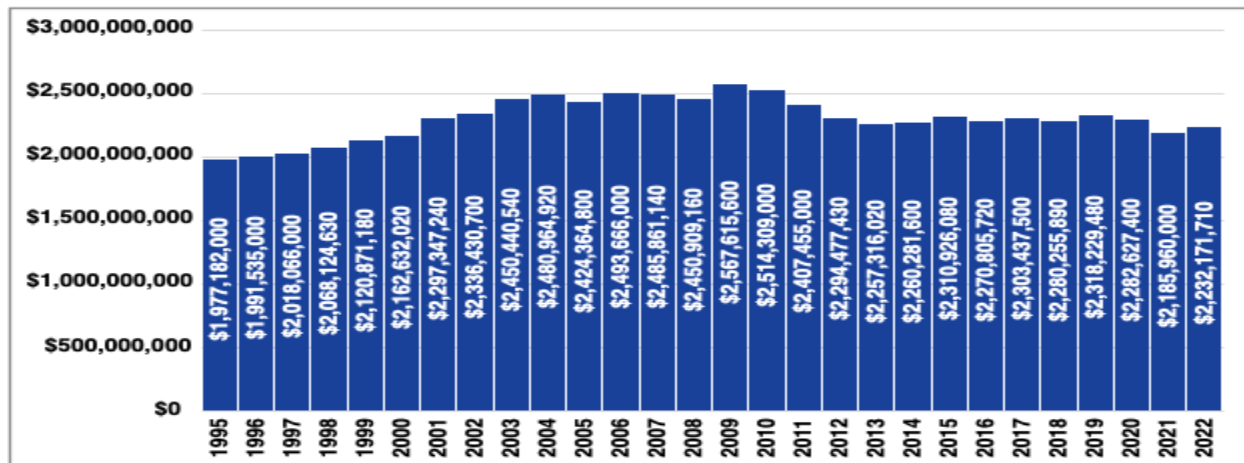
Maintenance and Operations expenditures include payment for utilities, custodial staff and services, groundskeeping, related custodial and repair materials, equipment, and maintenance contracts, as well as spending for security personnel, materials, and services.

Ohio school districts reported over \$2.2 billion of M&O annual operating-budget expenditures to the U.S. Census of Governments for FY2022. Adjusting district annual expenditures with the Consumer Price Index for inflation for years 1995-



2022—shown in Chart 2, this was an average of \$1,316 per FY2022 student for the last three years.

CHART 2: M&O SPENDING, FY1995-FY2022 (INFLATION-ADJUSTED 2024 DOLLARS)



Source: Data from the U.S. Census of Governments Fiscal Survey; actual M&O spending data available at www.school-infrastructure.org Data Dashboard, of the National Center on School Infrastructure (NCSI).

Ohio law establishes maintenance funding requirements for school districts that receive state support for school construction through programs administered by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) under [ORC Chapter 3318](#). These requirements are intended to ensure the long-term upkeep of classroom facilities that receive state investment. Under [ORC § 3318.05](#), districts participating in the [Classroom Facilities Assistance Program](#) (CFAP) and other co-funded programs must maintain a dedicated maintenance fund for a period of 23 years following project completion. Districts can fulfill this requirement in one of two ways:

- By levying a maintenance tax of at least one-half mill, or
- With approval from the OFCC, by using an alternative mechanism permitted under [ORC §§ 3318.051](#), [3318.052](#), or [3318.084](#), such as a permanent improvement levy, a transfer from another local fund, or donated local contributions.

The maintenance obligation is defined in the district's project agreement and is proportionate to the state's share of the total basic project cost. In the case of segmented or phased projects, maintenance funding must be provided for each



completed segment for a full 23-year term, as specified in [ORC § 3318.034\(E\)](#). [OFCC Policy PS-03](#) governs the administration of these maintenance funds. The required amount must be deposited into a separate account before construction begins. Funds in the maintenance account may only be used for the repair and upkeep of building systems included in the co-funded project. OFCC monitors compliance through documentation review, required reporting, and periodic audits.

These requirements apply only to districts receiving capital assistance through OFCC programs. Locally Funded Initiatives are excluded from these provisions, and maintenance responsibilities for those projects are entirely local.

Separately, all school districts in Ohio are subject to a broader statutory set-aside for facility maintenance under [ORC §§ 3315.18](#) and [3315.19](#). Most districts must annually deposit a minimum percentage of either their base cost per pupil or their base revenue into a capital and maintenance fund. These funds may be used for the acquisition, improvement, or repair of permanent improvements. The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce may waive or modify this requirement for districts in fiscal emergency, watch, or caution status.

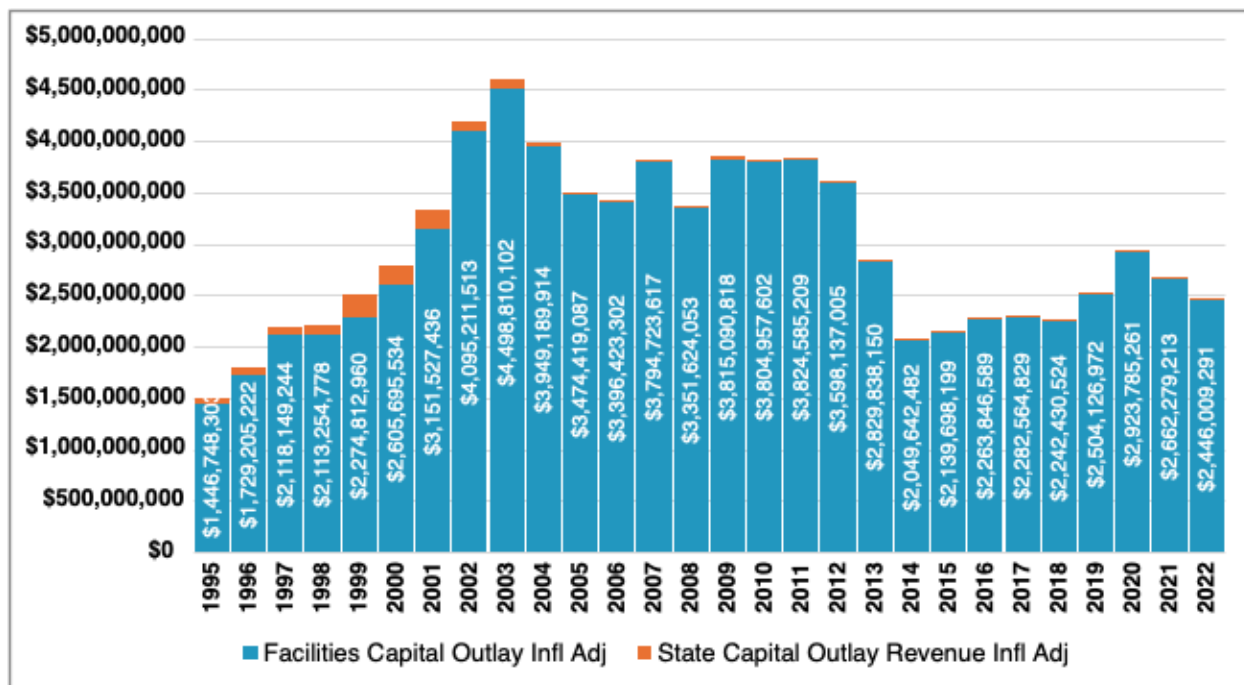
FACILITIES CAPITAL FUNDING

In addition to annual operating funds for facilities, school districts are responsible for the long-range planning, design, financing, construction, and major renovation and systems renewals of public school buildings and grounds. These capital outlay expenditures are used for new school construction, as well as for such items as roof replacements and upgrades to mechanical systems. In 2022, the facilities capital outlay for school construction and other equipment expended by Ohio local school districts, including state revenue for school construction was nearly \$2.5 billion (inflation-adjusted dollars). This excludes the cost of land, existing structures, and instructional equipment reported as part of the total capital outlay by school districts to the U.S. Census of Governments. Chart 3 shows inflation-adjusted school construction and other equipment capital expenditures from 1995 through fiscal year 2022 and the



revenue that the districts reported from the state for capital outlay and debt service to support their school construction and renovation projects.

CHART 3: CAPITAL OUTLAY FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION & OTHER EQUIPMENT FY 1995 – FY2022 (IN 2024\$)



Source: Data from the U.S. Census of Governments Fiscal Survey; actual Capital Outlay spending data available at www.school-infrastructure.org Data Dashboard, of the National Center on School Infrastructure (NCIS).

Through a series of co-funding programs, the state provides financial assistance to school districts for the construction, renovation, and replacement of school buildings. Funding is contingent on a state-local cost-sharing formula, established by statute and based on each district's relative wealth.

CLASSROOM FACILITIES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CFAP)

The [Classroom Facilities Assistance Program](#) (CFAP) is the state's primary capital funding mechanism. Authorized under [ORC § 3318.03](#), CFAP provides state funding for comprehensive facility upgrades based on a district's assessed need. Eligibility and local share percentages are determined by the district's relative wealth percentile, calculated under [ORC § 3318.011](#), with cost-sharing



formulas established by [ORC § 3318.032](#). Projects are subject to OFCC oversight, planning, and design standards, including compliance with the [Ohio School Design Manual](#) (OSDM).

EXPEDITED LOCAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (ELPP)

The [Expedited Local Partnership Program](#) (ELPP), authorized under [ORC § 3318.36](#), allows districts not yet eligible for CFAP to begin locally funded construction on projects included in a state-approved Master Facilities Plan. Costs incurred under ELPP may later be credited toward the district's local share if it becomes eligible for CFAP. Districts must segment their plan, use OSDM design standards, and receive OFCC approval prior to initiating work.

EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS PROGRAM (ENP)

The [Exceptional Needs Program](#) (ENP), governed by [ORC § 3318.37](#), permits OFCC to allocate up to 25% of its annual appropriations to assist districts facing serious building-related health and safety risks. Participation requires a Master Facilities Plan and compliance with co-funding, design, and planning standards.

ACCELERATED URBAN SCHOOL BUILDING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Accelerated Urban School Building Assistance Program, authorized under [ORC § 3318.38](#), allowed qualifying urban school districts to implement large-scale construction projects in multiple phases. The six participating districts developed a Master Facilities Plan approved by the OFCC and divided the scope of work into discrete segments over time. The program enabled flexibility in planning and financing for districts undertaking major capital improvements, with updated enrollment projections and facility data reviewed prior to each phase. Funding awards were subject to the same statutory cost-sharing formulas and design standards as other OFCC programs. The urban districts included were Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Akron, Toledo, and Dayton.

VOCATIONAL FACILITIES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VFAP)

The [Vocational Facilities Assistance Program](#) (VFAP), established under [ORC § 3318.40](#), provides capital funding for joint vocational school districts. The state



may allocate up to 2% of OFCC’s annual appropriations to VFAP-eligible projects. Cost-sharing requirements are defined under [ORC § 3318.44](#) and mirror those used in CFAP.

ALTERNATIVE FACILITIES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (AFAP)

The [Alternative Facilities Assistance Program](#) (AFAP), governed by [ORC § 3318.39](#), offers limited state support—up to \$1 million or 10% of what a district would receive under CFAP. It requires a 1:1 local match and bars recipients from accessing additional OFCC funding for a period of 20 years. AFAP may be used in circumstances where a district seeks a fixed contribution for targeted capital improvements.

TARGETED AND DISCRETIONARY CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAMS

In addition to its core co-funding programs, Ohio has authorized several targeted capital grant initiatives in recent years:

- [Appalachian Community Innovation Centers Program](#): Supported by \$85 million in Capital Projects Fund dollars and \$500 million in State Fiscal Recovery Funds, this program funds joint-use facilities in 32 Appalachian counties. Projects must be substantially complete by December 31, 2026, and include a public school district partner.
- [Community School Classroom Facilities Grant Program](#): Created by [Am. Sub. H.B. 64 \(131st GA\)](#) and expanded by [Sub. H.B. 438 \(132nd GA\)](#), this program provides capital funding for high-performing community schools. Grantees must provide a 50% local match, maintain educational use for 10 years, and comply with basic site control requirements. These grants are exempt from prevailing wage and competitive bidding mandates.
- [School Security Grant Program](#): First established under [H.B. 59 \(130th GA\)](#), this program provides capital funding for school safety upgrades such as secure entrances, radios, and emergency communication systems. Funding levels have varied by year and have been expanded to include nonpublic schools. Administered in partnership with the Ohio



Department of Public Safety, the program is funded through capital reappropriations and federal relief funds.

FACILITIES FINANCING

School facility construction in Ohio is financed through a state-local cost-sharing structure. The local share is funded by school districts through mechanisms authorized under state law, while the state share is administered by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) and appropriated by the General Assembly through the biennial capital budget.

As a shared state and local funding program, school districts in Ohio often finance their local share for school construction and major capital projects. The level of debt per student varies widely across states and districts. In Ohio there was \$14.9 billion of local district long-term debt outstanding at the end of FY2022--\$8,902 per student. Districts paid a total of \$552.8 million in interest in FY2022 for this debt. The level of debt, and how districts can access the bond markets is defined in state law.

A district's local share is calculated based on its relative wealth percentile, as defined in [ORC § 3318.011](#), using the cost-sharing formula outlined in [ORC § 3318.032](#). Once a district's Master Facilities Plan and project scope are approved, the OFCC submits the state share to the [Controlling Board](#) for release under [ORC § 3318.04](#). Local funds must be deposited into a dedicated Project Construction Fund prior to disbursement of any state funding, as required by [ORC § 3318.08](#).

Districts typically finance their share through voter-approved general obligation bonds under [ORC § 3318.06](#). Additional funding mechanisms include permanent improvement levies authorized under [ORC § 3318.051](#), school district income taxes, and local donated contributions such as irrevocable letters of credit or third-party investment funds under [ORC § 3318.084](#). Districts may also use lease-purchase agreements permitted by [ORC § 3313.375](#), subject to legal and procedural requirements.

The state does not have a dedicated revenue stream for school facilities. Instead, state funding for school construction is provided through capital



appropriations in the General Assembly’s biennial capital budget and is supported by general obligation bonds issued by the state. These appropriations are not reserved exclusively for education and must be specifically allocated and released on a project-by-project basis.

Districts may also choose to finance project components that are not eligible for OFCC reimbursement—such as auditoriums, athletic facilities, or other enhancements—through [Locally Funded Initiatives](#) (LFIs). These must be documented in a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with the OFCC and are not subject to the state’s cost-sharing or maintenance requirements.

All state and local funds for OFCC-approved projects are disbursed through the Commission’s [Drawdown Process](#), which includes documentation review, expenditure verification, and final closeout. Contributions from third parties or other nontraditional sources must be formally reviewed and approved in coordination with the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce before being credited to a district’s local share.

The [Ohio Auditor of State](#) plays a key role in the accountability of school facility funding by conducting financial audits of school districts that receive state capital assistance. While the Auditor does not oversee facility design or construction, its office is responsible for verifying that public funds—whether state appropriations or local bond proceeds—are used in accordance with applicable laws and project agreements. For OFCC-supported projects, the Auditor may review the use of funds deposited in the Project Construction Fund and examine compliance with state procurement, contracting, and expenditure rules.

JUDICIAL DECISIONS AFFECTING FACILITIES

In 1991, plaintiffs in *DeRolph v. State*, 78 Ohio St.3d 193 (1997), challenged the constitutionality of Ohio’s public school funding system under [Article VI, Section 2 of the Ohio Constitution](#), which requires a “thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the state.” The Ohio Supreme Court issued four major rulings in the case:



- In [DeRolph I](#) (1997), the Court found the funding system unconstitutional, citing inadequate and unsafe school facilities in low-wealth districts as a central failure.
- In [DeRolph II](#) (2000), the Court reaffirmed this finding, holding that subsequent legislative reforms did not cure the constitutional violations.
- In [DeRolph III](#) (2001) was dismissed on procedural grounds.
- In [DeRolph IV](#) (2002), the Court again found the funding system unconstitutional but declined to retain jurisdiction, leaving further action to the General Assembly and executive branch.

In response, the General Assembly enacted legislation codified in [Chapter 3318 of the Ohio Revised Code](#), which established the [Ohio School Facilities Commission](#) (OSFC) and defined a new state role in school construction. Under [ORC § 3318.03](#), the OSFC was charged with determining facility needs and administering assistance for the construction, acquisition, and renovation of classroom facilities. The state also created the [Classroom Facilities Assistance Program](#) and prioritized funding for low-wealth districts.

OHIO PK — 12 SCHOOL FACILITIES STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability systems for facilities involve facility standards, assessments, and reporting on the health, safety, education, and other factors associated with PK – 12 public school buildings and grounds. It involves systems for measuring and communicating conditions, and the authority to encourage or enforce changes in school design, construction, operations and maintenance.

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS STANDARDS

In Ohio, the day-to-day maintenance and operation of public school facilities is the responsibility of local school districts. This includes custodial services, cleaning, sanitation, groundskeeping, and the staffing and oversight of building maintenance personnel. These operational responsibilities are established under [ORC § 3313.37](#), which assigns boards of education the duty to “have the care and custody of all public school property in the district.”



For districts that receive capital funding through state-assisted programs administered by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC), additional maintenance obligations are imposed to support the long-term stewardship of co-funded buildings. Under [ORC § 3318.05](#), districts must maintain a dedicated maintenance fund and submit a maintenance plan as a condition of receiving state assistance. The maintenance plan must outline preventive maintenance procedures, staffing needs, and component-specific schedules and must remain in effect for 23 years following project completion.

The requirements for these plans are further detailed in [OFCC Policy PS-03](#), which provides formatting guidance and content expectations. Districts are required to upload their maintenance plans and related documentation into the [OFCC's OnTrack system](#), a web-based platform for reporting and tracking plan implementation. Ongoing activities must also be entered into the [OFCC's Computerized Maintenance Management System](#) (CMMS) to enable compliance monitoring.

These reporting and documentation systems are distinct from the daily maintenance operations carried out by local district staff. Routine tasks—including janitorial services, minor repairs, grounds maintenance, and utility management—remain entirely under the purview and financial responsibility of the school district. The OFCC may conduct periodic site reviews to ensure that co-funded facilities are maintained in accordance with the approved plan and to verify the district's compliance with program requirements.

BUILDING STANDARDS

Building standards for PK–12 public school facilities in Ohio are established through a combination of public building codes and state-specific school construction guidelines. The [Ohio Building Code](#) (OBC), adopted in the [Ohio Administrative Code under Chapter 4101:1](#), applies to all public buildings, including school facilities. It governs structural integrity, fire safety, accessibility, egress, roofing systems, and other critical elements related to the safety and usability of buildings. These standards include specifications for fire-resistance-rated construction, structural loading, roof assemblies, and safe means of egress. Compliance with the OBC is enforced by local building



departments and the [Ohio Board of Building Standards](#) during the design, permitting, and construction phases of all new construction and major renovations.

In addition to the general building code, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) requires adherence to the [Ohio School Design Manual](#) (OSDM) for any project receiving state capital assistance. The OSDM contains technical specifications for site selection, structural and material systems, and layout standards. Chapter 3 defines site requirements, including minimum acreage based on enrollment, access to utilities, topography, and proximity to transportation. Chapters 5 and 9 address systems such as wall and roof assemblies, floor finishes, and performance characteristics of construction materials. All state-funded projects must comply with these standards, and design professionals must certify adherence. Deviations from OSDM specifications must be formally approved through OFCC's variance request process. These requirements are incorporated by reference into project agreements under [ORC § 3318.05](#), which authorizes the OFCC to establish performance expectations for state-assisted facilities. Together, the Ohio Building Code and the Ohio School Design Manual establish a dual framework for public school facility construction, ensuring statutory code compliance and conformity with state program design and performance standards.

EDUCATIONAL ADEQUACY STANDARDS

Educational adequacy standards for PK–12 public school facilities in Ohio are established through the [Ohio School Design Manual](#) (OSDM), which provides technical requirements for the design and configuration of instructional spaces. The OSDM includes minimum square footage requirements for general classrooms, science labs, and specialized instructional areas, as well as layout specifications to support program delivery. These standards are applied during the facility planning and design process for any project receiving state capital assistance through the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC).

Additional provisions related to educational adequacy appear in statute for specific instructional programs. Under [ORC § 3318.71](#), the OFCC is authorized to establish guidelines for classroom facilities used in joint STEM education



programs operated by qualifying partnerships of school districts. These partnerships must include districts located in two adjacent counties, each with populations between 40,000 and 50,000, and at least one of which borders another state. The statute requires that such facilities be used for collaborative STEM instruction and meet OFCC guidelines. Project proposals must identify how the facility will support joint programming and comply with applicable instructional and building standards.

HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

Under [**ORC § 3707.26**](#), local health districts are required to conduct semiannual inspections of all public and chartered nonpublic school buildings within their jurisdiction. These inspections assess a range of environmental and sanitary conditions, including the cleanliness and safety of classrooms, restrooms, cafeterias, playgrounds, and waste disposal areas. The purpose is to identify and mitigate any health hazards that may affect the learning environment.

The [Ohio Department of Health](#) provides guidance for these inspections through public health bulletins and resources such as [Creating Healthy School Environments](#), which outline best practices and voluntary guidelines for facility cleanliness, indoor air quality, pest management, and moisture control. Local health departments use this guidance to assess conditions and collaborate with school administrators to correct deficiencies.

In addition to environmental health oversight, ODH also partners with the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce to support the development of school-based health centers (SBHCs). These centers, located within school facilities, provide services such as primary care, behavioral health, dental and vision care, and chronic disease management. Their integration into schools reflects a coordinated effort between health and education agencies to address student wellness directly on site.

AIR QUALITY

Air quality requirements for PK–12 public school facilities in Ohio are established through design standards and commissioning protocols for state-funded construction projects. The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission



(OFCC) requires compliance with the [M130-08 Commissioning Scope K12](#) as a condition of participation in capital funding programs. This scope mandates that a third-party Commissioning Authority (CxA) review the Indoor Air Quality Management Plan, oversee HVAC duct cleaning, and conduct functional performance testing of ventilation systems. The CxA must verify that HVAC systems meet operational specifications and perform seasonal testing to assess pressurization and airflow during both heating and cooling cycles.

Additional mechanical system standards are detailed in the [Ohio School Design Manual](#) (OSDM). These include requirements for system zoning, outdoor air exchange, and mechanical ventilation in all occupied spaces. Equipment must be capable of maintaining prescribed temperature and humidity levels. Projects using state funds must demonstrate compliance with these specifications. Deviations must be formally approved through the OFCC variance process.

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce encourages the development of [Indoor Air Quality Management Plans](#) as a facility-level best practice. These may include HVAC inspection protocols, air filtration strategies, and communication procedures but are not required by statute.

CHEMICAL HAZARDS

Chemical safety in Ohio public school facilities is governed by multiple provisions in the Ohio Administrative Code. [Rule 1301:7-7-50](#) of the Ohio Fire Code sets requirements for the storage and handling of hazardous materials in educational occupancies. The rule includes provisions for labeling, segregation of incompatible substances, secondary containment, and ventilation. It prohibits the storage of certain water-reactive substances in basements unless those areas are protected by an automatic sprinkler system and explicitly approved by the fire code official. School staff must maintain updated chemical inventories and ensure access to safety data sheets in areas where chemicals are stored or used. Compliance is overseen by local fire authorities during routine inspections.

[Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-12-12](#) addresses the use and storage of cleaning supplies and disinfectants in educational settings. The rule requires that such substances be stored in labeled containers and kept in areas



inaccessible to children. These standards apply to custodial closets, storage rooms, and any spaces where cleaning agents are routinely handled.

For state-funded construction projects, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) incorporates chemical hazard controls into project planning through guidance in the [Ohio School Design Manual](#) (OSDM). The OSDM recommends features such as dedicated chemical storage areas with ventilation, eyewash stations, and spill containment in science laboratories and other instructional spaces where hazardous materials may be used.

Radon mitigation systems are regulated under [Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3701-69-08](#). Although radon testing in schools is not mandatory, systems installed for mitigation must comply with design and installation standards issued by the Ohio Department of Health.

Pesticide use in school facilities is governed by [Rules 901:5-11-14](#) and [901:5-11-15](#). Schools implementing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) must follow written procedures for pest identification, monitoring, and control methods. Pesticide applications conducted during school hours require prior written notice and clearly posted signage per state rule. Applicators must be properly licensed and comply with documentation requirements.

WATER QUALITY

Water quality in Ohio public school facilities is governed by a combination of building standards, plumbing codes, and environmental regulations. For state-assisted construction projects, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) requires compliance with the [M130-08 Commissioning Scope K12](#). This guidance assigns the Commissioning Authority (CxA) responsibility for verifying that domestic hot water systems and rainwater recovery systems are installed and function in accordance with approved specifications. Commissioning procedures include system startup checks, trend analysis, and functional performance testing. The [Ohio School Design Manual](#) (OSDM) also outlines plumbing system design standards for co-funded facilities, including requirements for water treatment infrastructure, emergency power for water systems, and the use of lead-free components.



All public schools in Ohio that operate their own water systems or are served by public water systems must comply with primary drinking water standards established in [Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 3745-81](#). These standards include monitoring for lead and copper, maximum contaminant level enforcement, sampling frequency, and public notification requirements. Schools must work with their public water system provider to meet applicable monitoring and reporting obligations.

[Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 3745-1](#) sets statewide surface water quality standards, which apply to any school facilities that may impact surface waters through discharges or runoff. These standards are intended to ensure that schools located near or drawing from surface water sources comply with water quality criteria established by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY STANDARDS

The [M130-08 Commissioning Scope K12](#) requires a third-party Commissioning Authority (CxA) to verify the operational performance of building systems such as HVAC, lighting, domestic hot water, and rainwater recovery systems. These procedures include seasonal testing, startup verification, and trend analysis to confirm that systems function as specified.

Under [ORC § 3318.112](#), all new school buildings constructed with OFCC funding must be designed to accommodate the future installation of photovoltaic (solar) systems. This includes provisions for roof loading, orientation, and electrical infrastructure. Districts may apply for a waiver of this requirement under defined conditions.

OFCC also applies sustainable design standards through its [Green Schools Program](#), which incorporates elements of third-party environmental certification systems into project planning. These standards address design criteria related to resource use, thermal comfort, and mechanical performance, and are included as part of project review and approval procedures.

In addition to OFCC requirements, school districts may participate in state energy efficiency programs administered by the [Ohio Department of Development](#). The [Energy Loan Fund](#) provides low-interest financing for



qualifying energy efficiency and advanced energy projects in public schools. Applicants must complete an energy audit and demonstrate cost-effectiveness of proposed improvements. The [School Energy Performance Contracting Program](#), established in 1985, permits school districts to finance energy-related facility upgrades through long-term utility cost savings without requiring voter approval. Eligible projects include lighting retrofits, HVAC system improvements, and building automation upgrades.