



**National Center on
School Infrastructure**

What States Know (and Don't) About Their School Buildings

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Education policy has invested enormously in measuring student outcomes—test scores, graduation rates, chronic absenteeism—and in deciding what to do with the results. The condition of the buildings where those students learn has received markedly less attention.

As the saying goes, you can't fix what you don't measure.

In most of the country, remarkably little is measured about public school facilities, which means states routinely make billion-dollar capital funding decisions, respond to enrollment shifts, and field crises over mold or failing HVAC systems without basic information about what buildings exist, what condition they are in, or what it costs to fix them.

The federal government has largely left facilities data and measurement to states. The National Center for Education Statistics's (NCES) most recent national sample survey of school facilities conditions was published in [2014](#). No federal collection covers facility condition, inventory, or capacity. It falls to states to set facility reporting requirements, collect associated data, and decide what information becomes public. So what do states actually know?

Every state approaches facilities data differently, but a model approach is possible.

To better understand what states know about their K-12 public school facilities, we reviewed the facility data policies and practices of all fifty states and the District of Columbia.

Our analysis showed enormous variability across the country; each state has a different approach to facilities data. In short:

- In a handful of states, anyone can see the condition of every public school building online.
- A larger group of states collect real statewide data with at least some frequency, but keep it in reports or password-protected data systems.
- Roughly a fifth of states collect essentially no data about facilities beyond school directories and locations.

This brief organizes what we found along four dimensions:

- **What** states collect (the types of facility data),
- **How** states collect data (methods and mandates),
- **Access and visibility** of data (whether anyone outside the agency can see it), and
- **What states do with data** (whether the data drives funding and policy decisions).

Based on our analysis of state approaches to public school facilities data, we identified four gaps across nearly every state. We also propose a model approach that draws on elements from six states and the District of Columbia. (*Note: Throughout the piece, we provide links to state data systems where they exist publicly.*)

What types of facility data states collect: A typology

“Facility data” is not one thing. The state systems we reviewed collect some combination of seven types of data:

Inventory is the baseline: what buildings exist, their age, gross square footage, construction type, and use. A genuine building-level inventory, as opposed to a directory of school names and addresses, exists in fewer than half the states.

Condition and assessment data answer the question of whether buildings are safe and functional: ratings of major systems (roof, HVAC, plumbing, electrical), identified deficiencies, and estimated repair costs, often rolled up into a facility condition index (FCI). This is the most policy-relevant category and the one where collection methods differ most: a licensed engineer’s assessment and a district administrator’s survey response can both be labeled “condition data.”



Learn more about [Facility Condition Assessments](#).

Capacity and utilization data compare enrollment to available space: rated capacity, percent of capacity used, and identification of overcrowded or underused buildings. With enrollment

declining across much of the country, this is arguably the category states will need most urgently in the next decade, and one of the least developed.

Design data track adherence to state space and design standards: room counts, square footage by space type, and educational specifications. These data usually exist only where a state reviews construction projects.

Construction project data track individual projects as they move through state review: approvals, project status, and, in a few states, standardized construction costs.

Finance data (capital spending, debt, state aid flows) are the most commonly collected category, because they are tracked in standard school finance accounting systems and (if applicable) for state capital funding programs.

Performance data usually reflect a single metric—indoor air quality, lead in water, energy use—and may be collected or mandated by a separate department or policy. In practice, this data usually includes a single environmental measure rather than a comprehensive performance review, but this can vary depending on what is being measured.

The lines between these types blur in practice: a statewide assessment typically produces facility inventory, condition, and capacity data, and states often spread the pieces across multiple agencies—such as an education department, a construction authority, a health department running a lead-testing dashboard.

How states collect the data

When facility data exists, it arrives via one of four routes, and the route shapes its quality.

State-run or state-commissioned facility assessments produce the most rigorous data. For example:

- **Colorado's** [BEST program](#) has professional assessors evaluate roughly 3,400 school buildings on a targeted five-year reassessment cycle.
- **New Mexico's** Public School Facilities Authority maintains a [Facilities Assessment Database](#) that contains building-level condition data for every public school—system

ages, deficiencies, and repair cost estimates—and is updated annually to produce condition indices that rank every facility in the state.

- **Wyoming** periodically assesses every school building and [scores each with an FCI](#). Notably, that system exists because school-finance litigation (the *Campbell County* cases) forced the state to know the condition of its buildings.
- **Rhode Island**’s 2016–17 assessment of more than 300 campuses became the landmark “State of Rhode Island Schoolhouses” report and seeded an ongoing [statewide database](#).
- **Vermont**’s Act 72 assessment put system-level condition data for every public school building on a [public dashboard](#), with twenty years of projected renewal costs.
- **Massachusetts**’s MSBA conducts a periodic [statewide School Survey](#) that includes professional assessments and a comparative condition score for each building.
- **New York** requires districts to commission [Building Condition Surveys](#) from licensed architects or engineers every five years.

Annual reporting mandates typically include less information, but it’s more current. For example:

- **Florida**’s [FISH](#) (Florida Inventory of School Houses) is the classic example: districts continuously update a statewide inventory of building age, classroom counts, square footage, and permanent-versus-portable status under state validation rules, making it one of the oldest and most complete facility inventories in the country.
- **Minnesota** collects building age, square footage, condition, and usage from every district every year, feeding its Long-Term Facilities Maintenance revenue program.
- **Iowa** runs a statewide [Facilities Data Collection](#) aligned to the NCES Facilities Inventory Model (one of the only states to adopt the national data standard), although the results are available only internally.
- **Delaware** requires every district and charter to assess its buildings annually with a standardized [School Facilities Evaluation Instrument](#).
- **Texas** recently stood up a statewide facility usage collection that captures building-level capacity and unused space.

- **Tennessee's** TACIR collects a condition rating and improvement-cost estimate for every public school, every year—but the ratings are produced by a survey of local officials, not a direct physical assessment.

Plan-based submissions embed facility data in required district planning documents. For example:

- **Kentucky** districts file facility plans with building evaluations every four years.
- **West Virginia** counties maintain ten-year Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plans with building inventories updated annually.
- **New Jersey** districts submit Long-Range Facilities Plans with room-level inventories and functional capacity.
- **Maryland** districts file Educational Facilities Master Plans annually.
- **Arkansas** publishes district Academic Facilities Master Plans and statewide facility needs lists.
- **Georgia** districts complete facilities surveys every five years. The data in these plans can be rich, but it lives in hundreds of separate documents rather than a statewide dataset.

Funding-triggered collection is the most common route but provides the least data. In many states, facility data exists only because a district asked for money. For example:

- **Ohio's** Facilities Construction Commission conducts thorough assessments—up to 23 building systems—but only when a district enters a state capital program, so the data is point-in-time and covers only participants.
- **Washington's** [Inventory and Condition of Schools \(ICOS\)](#) system is among the most sophisticated facility databases in the country, but participation is driven by districts seeking construction assistance, so coverage is broad rather than complete.
- **New Hampshire** sees condition data only in building aid applications.
- **California** requires every school project to be reviewed by both the Division of the State Architect and the Department of Education, but the extensive administrative records generated by mandatory construction review simply accumulate unused and serve no statewide data purpose.

Cutting across these routes is the question of who does the assessing. Externally assessed statewide data (professional assessors or licensed engineers) exist in roughly ten states — **New Mexico, Wyoming, Colorado, Rhode Island, Vermont, Massachusetts, Ohio** (for program participants), **New York** (locally held), and the one-time **Michigan** and **Montana** studies. Most other facility assessment data is district self-reporting.

 *The National Center on School Infrastructure (NCSI) has developed tools to help school districts overcome the cost and capacity hurdles they often encounter in conducting a facility condition assessment. [Read Jeff Vincent's blog post to learn about the tools and access them online.](#)*

What states share publicly: Four tiers of access

Collecting data is not the same as publishing it; there is often a gap between what agencies hold and what the public can see. Across the fifty states and D.C., we found that states can be categorized into four distinct tiers based on the degree of access that the public has to data.

Tier 1: Public statewide databases and dashboards

Six states plus D.C. let anyone look up facility inventory or condition data online, and three more states publish facility funding data:

- **Vermont's** [dashboard](#) covers building-system condition for every school, filterable by district and system, with projected renewal costs.
- **Hawai'i**—helped by being a single statewide district—publishes deferred maintenance, capital projects, inspection data, and even school-level energy reporting on its [facilities portal](#).
- **Colorado** publishes data through [Facility Insight](#).
- **Rhode Island** publishes data through [Facilities Map](#) (year built, square footage, condition ratings, deficiencies per school).
- **Oregon's** [School Facilities Database](#) offers a public inventory plus system-level condition ratings and FCIs.
- **Florida's** [FISH](#) remains the inventory benchmark.

- **Washington, D.C.** goes a step further than any state: alongside the EdScape facilities [platform](#), the Department of General Services publishes a [live public dashboard](#) of school maintenance work orders and HVAC status — operational transparency that exists nowhere else.
- **California** belongs in this tier for funding data only: the OPSC [Open Data Portal](#) publishes project-level state facility funding as downloadable datasets—while facility condition remains scattered across school-level report cards.
- **Connecticut** similarly publishes a downloadable school construction grants [dataset](#).
- **New Mexico** offers a searchable awarded-projects [database](#).

Tier 2: Statewide data that lives in documents

A larger group of states publishes statewide facility data in PDFs, report appendices, and plan documents rather than in queryable databases. For a researcher or advocate, this tier is usable with effort; for a community member, it is effectively invisible.

- **Tennessee**’s annual TACIR [infrastructure report](#) covers every school.
- **North Carolina** publishes a five-year [Facility Needs Survey](#) (most recently totaling roughly \$12.8 billion in identified needs).
- **Alaska** publishes annual condition-scored capital project [priority lists](#).
- **Arkansas, Kentucky, South Carolina, and West Virginia** publish or file district plans and needs lists.
- **Massachusetts** publishes statewide survey summaries (school-level detail is not fully released) along with what may be the best public construction [cost data](#) in the country.
- **Illinois**’s decennial Health/Life Safety surveys of every building are systematic but published only in documents.

Tier 3: Statewide data systems available only internally

Some of the most comprehensive facility data held by states is in this tier.

- **New Mexico's** Facilities Assessment Database and **Wyoming's** Operate AiM system hold building- and system-level detail on every school, but access requires credentials; the public can only see rankings and summary reports.
- **Washington's** ICOS is district- and agency-facing.
- **Maine's** facilities reporting modules are role-restricted.
- **Iowa's** NCES-aligned collection is internal.
- **Maryland** is building its Integrated Master Facility Asset Library into what could become one of the most complete state systems, but public access is not yet part of the design, with integration regulations taking effect no earlier than FY2027.

Tier 4: One-time studies or no statewide data

Four states have statewide condition data that has been collected as a point-in-time snapshot rather than systematically:

- **Montana's** [2008 Public Schools Facility Condition Assessment](#)
- **Pennsylvania's** 2014 statewide analysis of school facilities and future capital needs (not available online, but cited in the 2018 [Public School Building Construction and Reconstruction Advisory Committee Final Report](#))
- **Utah's** [2021 School Plant Capital Outlay Report](#)
- **Michigan's** [2025 Statewide School Facilities Study](#)—the first statewide facility assessment in the state's history.

Eleven states—Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and (for now) Idaho—maintain no statewide facility data at all, beyond school directories and GIS point locations. These are overwhelmingly local-control states where school construction is funded by local bonds and referenda. Idaho adopted facilities funding legislation in 2024 (H521) that mandates a new district assessment

requirement, and New Hampshire has pending legislation that could create a statewide assessment.

What states do with the data

States use facility data for different policy and decision-making purposes; we found that facility data gets collected, maintained, and taken most seriously where it is tied to funding programs.

Some states use data to **prioritize capital funding**. For example:

- **New Mexico**'s condition indices produce a weighted statewide ranking (weighted New Mexico Condition Index—wNMCI) that determines which projects the Public School Capital Outlay Council funds.
- **Alaska** scores every capital project application and publishes ranked priority lists annually.
- **Colorado**'s BEST assessments drive eligibility and prioritization for capital assistance.
- **Wyoming**'s FCI scores and annual per-school utilization calculations feed the School Facilities Commission's budget recommendations to the legislature.
- **Maine**'s condition evaluations produce the state's construction priority list.
- **Massachusetts** uses survey and inventory data to determine project eligibility, prioritize capital funding, and support state planning.

In these states, a district's data justifies its request for funding—this keeps the data current, but also means the data's scope is defined by the funding program's needs rather than the public's broader interests in understanding school facility conditions to hold local and state leaders accountable.

Data may also be used in **formula funding**. For example:

- **Minnesota**'s annual facility age and square footage submissions feed directly into the Long-Term Facilities Maintenance revenue allocation.

- **Arizona**’s statewide database of building age, condition, and capacity drives its Building Renewal Grants and New School Facilities eligibility.

Data tied to a formula gets reported reliably, because unreported data is unfunded data.

Less commonly, data might also be used for **compliance and accountability**. For example:

- **Illinois** requires decennial health/life-safety surveys of every building.
- **New York** requires five-year Building Condition Surveys.
- **California**’s Facility Inspection Tool results appear in every school’s accountability report card (collected school by school and never aggregated statewide, making it a striking case of public-but-not-usable data).
- **Delaware**’s building assessments surface at public school board meetings and go to the state, but no statewide dataset emerges.

Planning is another common use. Several states, including **Kentucky, West Virginia,** and **New Jersey**, require districts to adopt facility master plans, and in some cases, such as [Kentucky](#), those plans determine eligibility for state construction aid. Some states prescribe the data a plan must contain, while others leave the content to districts. Either way, because the data sits in individual plan documents, states rarely analyze it across districts.

In a handful of states, the answer to “what does the state do with facility data?” is *nothing*. The construction-approval records in **California**’s and **Alabama**’s project files, the capacity data in **Delaware**’s Certificate of Necessity reviews, and many district facility plans, are administrative records only: collected as part of an administrative process and then filed.

The **Wyoming** example deserves emphasis because it shows the causal arrow can run both ways: courts forced the state to build a data system so that funding could follow need, and the system has outlived the litigation. States being sued over disparities in facility funding today might note that a statewide assessment is usually among the first remedies sought.

What's missing almost everywhere

Four gaps stand out.

Construction cost data. Very few states can say what school construction costs, in comparable terms. Florida has published [cost-per-square-foot data](#) for public school projects back to 1994; Virginia publishes [annual construction cost per square foot](#) by school level; Massachusetts's MSBA publishes [project-level and statewide cost reports](#). That is close to the entire national list. Everywhere else, cost data lives in project files—which means states setting construction funding formulas are doing so with little systematic data to know what construction costs.

Utilization. Given enrollment decline, the scarcity of utilization data is the most consequential gap. Wyoming calculates current and projected enrollment against capacity for every school, every year; Texas's new facility usage collection and Rhode Island's Facilities Map capacity fields are recent additions; New York City's School Construction Authority publishes an annual "Blue Book" of enrollment, capacity, and utilization for every city school building, but New York State does not. Most states facing school-closure decisions in the next decade will make them without statewide utilization data.

Performance. Where building performance data exists, it is narrow: lead-in-water dashboards (Delaware, Maine, Colorado, Michigan's fixture-level Filter First data), some energy reporting (Hawaii, Oregon), and D.C.'s work-order and HVAC dashboards. Delaware is instructive: the state collects broad performance information, but the only publicly accessible piece is its [lead-in-water dashboard](#).

Comparability. Even where states collect the same category of data, definitions differ: "condition" might be a professionally assessed FCI (New Mexico, Wyoming), a survey rating from a local official (Tennessee, North Carolina), or an inspection checklist (California's Facility Inspection Tool (FIT)). Iowa's adoption of the [NCES Facilities Inventory Model](#) is the rare gesture toward a national standard—a standard that exists precisely so that state data could someday be aggregated, and that almost no state uses.

Toward a model state approach

No state does everything well, but a model state approach could have features present in several states: Florida’s **durability** (a continuously updated inventory, decades old, embedded in routine district operations); Vermont’s **transparency** (every building’s systems and twenty-year renewal costs on a public dashboard); Colorado’s **discipline** (a defined professional reassessment cycle); Wyoming’s **utilization tracking**; Massachusetts’s **cost data**; D.C.’s **operational openness**; and Iowa’s **alignment to national data standards**. A state that combined those seven features would know what it has, what condition it’s in, how full it is, what fixing it will cost, and whether the fixes are happening—and so would the public.

Four principles follow from this review:

Every state should maintain a building-level facility inventory, public and updated on a defined cycle. A directory of addresses is not an inventory. The floor here is low: eleven states have nothing, and the ones that do this well (Florida, Oregon) demonstrate that it becomes routine once embedded in district reporting.

Condition data should be assessed, not just asked. Survey-based ratings are better than nothing, but funding-grade decisions need standardized professional facility assessment on a recurring cycle—and standardized definitions, so that “poor condition” means the same thing across district and state lines.

Cost and utilization tracking are cheap additions with outsized value. Virginia and Florida demonstrate that publishing construction costs is administratively trivial once projects are already reviewed; Wyoming demonstrates the same for utilization. As the field grapples with construction inflation, enrollment decline, and school consolidation over the next decade, these are the two datasets that will be in most demand for informing facility policy.

Publishing data matters as much as collecting it. The most sobering pattern we found is Tier 3: states that built serious, expensive data systems that aren’t accessible to the public. A dataset that’s accessible only by internal stakeholders doesn’t help school boards benchmark, advocates make the case for investment, researchers study what works, or communities

understand the buildings they own. The marginal cost of a public dashboard, next to the cost of the assessment behind it, would have significant payoff.

States built the country's student data infrastructure over the past two decades because federal policy demanded it, and funding followed. Nothing comparable has happened for school facilities, but the states profiled here show that many pieces of a data solution already exist.



About this analysis

The [Center for Cities + Schools at the University of California, Berkeley](#) compiled this information in spring and summer 2026, with research assistance from UC Berkeley students Nadia Pai and Veronica Le, building on information on state policy collected by the 21st Century School Fund and found on their [website](#). We extended that work to all 50 states and D.C. using state statutes, regulations, and agency websites. We grouped the data into seven types, building on the topic categories the 21st Century School Fund uses for state data policies and adding construction project data. We then classified each state's data by how accessible it is to the public and how the state uses it. We checked each source against the relevant statute or agency website to confirm that the data requirement or system exists, but we did not contact state agencies to verify our findings, and we did not assess the quality of the data itself, such as its completeness, accuracy, or how current it is. This is a snapshot: states may collect facility data through administrative processes that are publicly documented, and websites and state practices change. We welcome feedback on any errors or omissions contained herein or changes to state systems that we should incorporate. Contact NCSI: <https://school-infrastructure.org/contact-us/>