



# New York State Education Department

Richard P. Mills, Commissioner

Elementary, Secondary, and Continuing Education  
Facilities Management and Information Reporting  
Facilities Planning

James A. Kadamus, Deputy Commissioner  
Charles A. Sauberla, Coordinator  
Carl T. Thurnau, Supervisor

## Office of Facilities Planning Newsletter #45 – November 2003

### PLEASE READ THIS THOROUGHLY

#### New Project Submission Requirements:

As a result of our request for suggestions to help us speed up the review process and reduce the backlog, we are implementing several changes in our methods of handling project submissions and conducting reviews. Please take note of these changes as they will effect all projects.

We have implemented changes to the project information shown on the web-site under "Capital Construction Project Review and Approval Status". These changes include listing the project consultants on the web-site, eliminating the "addendum overdue" notice from automatically posting when the engineering (or architecture) review may not have been completed, and posting an estimate of the average and maximum review times expected at the time a project is submitted. We will also be implementing a "Dual Review Process", a "Face-to-face Review Process", and replacing the "Quick Review Process" with a new "Renovation Review Process". As discussed in further detail below, projects will be classified upon receipt by SED project managers into one of several categories as defined in the New York State Building Code. Projects will be processed differently under these new guidelines depending on the project's classification.

The terminology "Preliminary Submission" will now be "Preliminary Building Aid Review" (PBA) so as to differentiate it from a preliminary code review. The PBA Review will be required of ALL projects in which new instructional space is being added in order to review for educational purposes and eligibility for building aid. It should be submitted at least six months prior to the final submission so that a maximum cost allowance can be calculated based on the building aid units assigned to the project by grade level or category and for new and existing space. A review number will be issued for the final submission only after the SED project manager has completed the PBA Review. Notwithstanding the above, a PBA review may be waived by the SED project manager under certain conditions with the understanding that the district will not receive building aid estimates until the final documents are submitted. Examples include the addition of one or two classrooms, a simple gym station or non-instructional space such as an auditorium, cafeteria or bus garage.

Refer to Attachment A in the "Instructional Guide for Public School Districts and BOCES for Obtaining Building Permits for Capital Construction Projects" (July 2002) for complete submission details.

#### **1. Dual Review Process:**

The Dual Review Process is an internal Facilities Planning change that will effect all projects.

**In the Dual Review Process, each project will receive a review number upon receipt. This will start the clock ticking.** Under the old process, a review number was not assigned until the SED Project Manager had received all information (forms and letters) required in the initial processing phase. The time indicated for backlog will now be the **total** time for processing the project including the time with the SED project manager prior to the architecture/engineering review. (Previously, the posted backlog did not include time with the SED project manager). Although this will initially cause the backlog to appear longer, it will be a more accurate estimate of time prior to approval.

**The SED Architecture/Engineering review will now be able to proceed independently of the SED Project Manager's Review.** Our web-site will be changed to include the Architectural, Engineering, and Project Manager's signoff. The A/E review of the project will not be held up regardless of whether the project manager has any outstanding requests for required administrative items listed on the "Checklist for Application for Building Permit and Examination and Approval of Final Plans and Specifications", Form FP-CL. However, the A/E review cannot begin until certain forms, such as the Code Compliance Checklist (FP-CCC5/2003), have been properly completed. **The project will not be approved until all three parties have been satisfied.**

These changes to our record keeping systems can be viewed on the "Capital Construction Project Review and Approval Status" page on the web-site.

## **2. Face-to-face Review Process:**

This is a process by which all A/E firms can set up a face-to-face review of their projects. **The face-to-face reviews will only apply to projects that are new buildings, building additions, or reconstruction.** Reconstruction projects must meet the definition provided for reconstruction in the Building Code of NY State, Appendix K, Chapter K2, which is:

**RECONSTRUCTION.** Any project where the reconfiguration of space, as indicated on the construction documents, is such that it adversely impacts the means of egress shared with spaces outside the work area; affects the entire occupancy; or totals more than two-thirds of the building area. ...

At the beginning of January we will include an announcement on the web-site and in the Newsletter. Initially we will limit the face-to-face reviews to a block of projects by review number. This block of numbers will be provided within the web-site announcement. We will remove the limits imposed by the block as the backlog is reduced.

To make an appointment for a face-to-face review, complete the "[Plan Review Request Form](#)" at the Facilities Planning web-site. Barbara Castracani will assign an SED architect or engineer to meet your schedule whenever possible. There is one catch: our SED project managers will check all the administrative requirements previously mentioned in the "Dual Review Process" two weeks prior to the appointment. If everything isn't completed at this time, the appointment will be cancelled. We are willing to meet directly to help review and approve the more difficult and complicated designs. However, we will only do this where the project can be approved, which includes the administrative paperwork. Please note that the face-to-face request requires the completion and submission of the Code Compliance Checklist.

## **3. Renovation Review Process:**

We have been administratively keeping track of single trade projects for over 2½ years and reviewing them with little delay. The average approval time for these projects has been 3 weeks and less in many instances. The Renovation Review Process is being implemented as follows:

- A. The Renovation Review Process will include all projects that replace existing elements, equipment and/or fixtures using new materials, elements, equipment and/or fixtures.**
- B. To qualify each Renovation project we will use the definition for Renovation in the Building Code of NY State, Appendix K, Chapter K2, which is:

**RENOVATION.** The removal and replacement or the covering of existing materials, elements, equipment and/or fixtures using new materials, elements, equipment and/or fixtures that serve the same purpose, without reconfiguring the space.

Please note that Energy Performance Projects do not qualify. Alteration projects providing new space, changing the use of a space, or providing space modifications by covering the walls and floors are also not

qualified. We will continue to review site work projects and single trade projects that are not related to renovation projects.

C. Projects including any new element that is not a replacement of existing are not qualified even when most of the remainder of the project is qualified. We will strictly follow this requirement. Projects that are found by the technical review staff to contain work other than renovation work will not be processed in this fashion. Make sure that item 11 on the scope of proposed project form is sufficiently detailed to allow SED project managers to make this determination.

Initially, in an attempt to reduce the backlog, we would like to facilitate the Renovation projects already awaiting review, prior to reviewing new infrastructure projects. Please contact the school district's SED project manager about the qualification of your project for this type of review. For future projects you may be able to significantly reduce the approval time by packaging your projects properly. The idea for this proposal is that "replacement in kind" projects without new space, interior alterations etc, should require minimal code review and can be easily approved.

We are expecting a prompt response to SED review comments from any A/Es who qualify their work for inclusion to this list. Addenda periods of one or two months will not be acceptable.

### **Overview of Changes:**

Our objective is to significantly reduce the backlog while making reviews less time-consuming. This does not relieve any A/E firm of their obligation to provide fully code-compliant and 100% bid ready documents. Many A/E firms are already aware of continuous requests we have made of them to provide improved documents. One of the suggestions we received was to publicly identify in some fashion both those firms providing quality work and those in need of improvement. While we are not implementing that suggestion at this time, we will be contacting school districts in a timely fashion when their A/E consultants provide poor quality documents. A/E firms who consistently provide documents of less than a reasonable quality will receive copies of letters sent to the school districts rejecting their submissions.

### **New Staff:**

We have completed our interview process for new staff. Three new professional engineers began work in our office on November 6<sup>th</sup>. An additional registered architect began on November 20th. We believe that the addition of these staff will help to significantly reduce the backlog. We will introduce the new staff in future newsletters.

An Index of our Newsletters is available on our web site at <https://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/NewsLetters.htm>.

If you would like to have this Newsletter sent directly to you by e-mail, please send your e-mail address to  
Joe Levy at [jlevy@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:jlevy@mail.nysed.gov)

Please continue to send in your comments and requests. If you have a subject you would like addressed, feedback on the material you read, input or general comments we are happy to hear from you.