

Facilities Planning

Newsletter 77 – July 2006

EXCEL (Expanding our Children’s Education and Learning):

EXCEL is a new program Included in Chapter 61 of the Laws of 2006 to provide additional funding for certain types of school construction projects. Please view the questions and answers posted on our web site which provide basic information about the program for school districts.

<https://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/EXCEL/ExcelQ&A062606.htm>

To review the allocation for your school district visit http://stateaid.nysed.gov/excel_0607.htm.

Kitchen Fire Ratings in School Buildings:

The Building Code of NY State has eliminated the fire rating for kitchens. The kitchen requirements are for kitchens in assembly occupancies. These are required to have a sprinkler system. Since schools are educational occupancies sprinkler systems are not required. What to do?

We have been requiring the 2-hour fire rating for kitchens in schools for many years. This was the requirement of the previous building code. We also allowed the 2-hour fire rating to be eliminated when the kitchen had a sprinkler system, also allowed by the previous building code. As such, we are continuing to require the 2-hour fire rating of all kitchens when no sprinkler system is provided. This will apply to new kitchens and alterations to existing kitchens. Renovations and alterations to existing kitchens cannot reduce the original design or the fire separations between the kitchen and the remainder of the school building.

Which Projects Require Building Permits:

The following information is taken from our Instruction Guide for Public School Districts and BOCES Obtaining Building Permits for Capital Construction Projects (6/25/02). You can find the entire document on our web site at: <https://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/ProjMgmt.htm>.

All capital projects and maintenance must assure compliance with the requirements of the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code, the Manual of Planning Standards and the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

All new buildings must be formally submitted no matter the size or cost. Our tracking system for capital projects is set up on a building-by-building basis and the project control number that we assign to each project is building specific. This system assigns building numbers which are required for the fire safety reporting system. If the building does not qualify for a building permit as directed in the parameters below, then only the building number will be assigned. The formal submission may be limited to the LOI and contacting your Facilities Planning Project Manager. No building permit will be necessary.

For projects involving additions, renovations, alterations, and reconstruction:

- Where the construction contracts are expected to total less than \$5,000 per project, the school district or BOCES does not need to hire an architect or engineer. Projects having

construction costs of \$5,000 or more plans must be prepared, signed, and sealed by an architect or engineer who is licensed by the State of New York.

- Work involving health and safety of the building's occupants should always be discussed with our staff no matter what the cost. A determination regarding the building permit for projects less than \$10,000 will be made only after full disclosure of the nature of the work. The building permits are often not required. Projects where the expected construction contracts will total \$10,000 or more must make a formal submission to our office for a Building Permit. Again, we may waive the requirement for the building permit if the project does not affect health and safety of the building's occupants.

- All projects greater than \$20,000 require a building permit. They must all be submitted to Facilities Planning.

Summer Construction Schedule and Continuing in September:

A reminder, summer will be over soon enough and school will be reopening in less than seven weeks. For those school buildings presently with active construction projects please keep in mind the Commissioner's Regulations for Safety During Construction (155.5) and the requirements for occupancy.

Take time now to schedule the installation of materials that will need time for off gassing. This work is better done in July and August where possible. Schedule the off gassing process with time to resolve problems before opening day.

Before school opens, take a moment to be sure exits are not blocked, there are no dead ends, fire rated separations are provided between construction and student occupied areas, and noise is less than 60 db. If construction appears that it will extend beyond the summer recess, now is the time to consider/prepare temporary exiting plans which will ensure that proper exiting is provided from student occupied areas. Also, ensure that fire alarms are in working order and construction workers are not within student occupied areas when students are present. These apply both inside and outside the building.

Resolve all these issues before opening day and then schedule a fire drill to be sure the students are familiar with exiting the building. Remedy any problems that persist immediately to avoid dangerous conditions and complaints. These safety issues are easier to address now than after a complaint.

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.

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.