

Office of Facilities Planning Newsletter #89– July 2007

High Performance School Guidelines:

We are proud to announce the release of SED's High Performance Schools Design Guide, called NY- CHPS, the New York Collaborative for High Performance Schools. Significant time was spent with an advisory panel of experts from NYSERDA, AIA, ASHRAE, Certified energy managers, consulting engineers, the NYSDOH, and various school groups like the Association of Superintendents of School Buildings and Grounds (SBGA), the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO), the Association of Educational Safety and Health Professionals (AESHPS), and the Healthy Schools Network.

What is a High Performance School? Three Main attributes contribute to a High performance School design: 1) Facilities are designed to create a healthy and comfortable learning environments, 2) Facilities are less costly to operate than conventional code compliant buildings over the life of the facility, and 3) Facilities are constructed to conserve important resources such as energy and water.

Why should school districts design a High Performance School? Because high performance schools provide long term direct and indirect benefits to students, teachers, and both local and state taxpayers. Benefits include facilities that provide an outstanding learning environment, are durable, and easy to maintain, promote better indoor air quality, and may contribute to greater educational achievement.

With benefits like these, the obvious question is why wouldn't everyone build high performance facilities? The argument has always been about the extra design and construction cost. New studies put that issue to rest once and for all. The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (www.mtpc.org) studied 30 high performance schools nationwide and showed that although the additional upfront costs (as of December 2005) ranged between 1.5%-2.5% more than conventional schools, they provided long term financial benefits 20 times as large. Savings can accrue from reduced energy use, reduced water and sewer use, reduced equipment maintenance and replacement costs, reduced site maintenance, reduced liability costs, and even reduced costs due to lower teacher absenteeism.

Please review the NY-CHPS guideline, and encourage its use. The sooner districts embrace green design concepts, the sooner we can all enjoy cleaner, brighter, healthier and less costly school facilities. They are available on the facilities website at: <https://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/>. Search on NY CHPS.

Daisy-chaining Power Strips and Surge Suppressors:

During the course of the annual Fire and Building Safety Inspections, it has come to our attention that power strips (surge suppressors) are being connected together, or daisy-chained, to provide additional outlets for technology devices. This is an unacceptable practice. Each power strip must be plugged directly into a duplex outlet and, if used on a permanent basis, mounted so as to avoid being damaged from contact with cleaning materials and cleaning equipment. When power strips or surge suppressors are to be utilized for electronic

equipment than the corresponding number of duplex outlets must be provided so that there is one outlet for each strip or suppressor used. Also, any power strips used in schools must have integral over-current protection built into the device and be listed by UL, FM, etc., for their application.

Public School Health and Safety Committees:

A proactive responsive approach to maintaining school facilities is tied to student achievement. Moreover, well established and diverse partnerships are critical to the effective management and operation of school facilities. The school district's health and safety committee should be such an entity.

The establishment of a health and safety committee is not an optional activity. Public school health and safety committees have been required since 1999 pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation (CR) 155.4(d)(1). The core committee membership must include representatives from district officials, staff, bargaining units, and parents. This membership is to be expanded during construction projects to include the following: the project architect, construction manager, and the contractors as described in CR155.5(c)(2). The central goal of the committee is to protect the health and safety of all building occupants, and the committee is charged with specific responsibilities to achieve that goal.

To comply with the specific intent of this important role, the health and safety committee must engage in the following activities:

- A member of the health and safety committee must participate in the annual visual inspection. (CR155.4(b)(2)(iii))
- The committee must be involved in the investigation and disposition of complaints related to facility health and safety concerns. (CR155.4(d)(7))
- The expanded health and safety committee is required to be involved in monitoring safety during school construction projects. This role includes convening periodic meetings to review health and safety concerns and issues associated with the project. (CR155.5(c)(2))
- The School Facility Report Card is to include a description of the health and safety committee's activities. (CR155.6(c)(17))

When receiving questions from the public (including parents, faculty, and staff) related to the condition of specific school facilities, the State Education Department's initial response is to refer the individuals back to that school district's health and safety committee. Consequently, it is essential to keep in mind that CR155.5(c)(2) states that "boards of education and boards of cooperative educational services shall establish procedures for involvement of the health and safety committee to monitor safety during school construction projects." Failure to have this mandatory committee in place will prompt the Education's Department involvement.

For additional information and guidance on health and safety committees, please contact your BOCES health and safety coordinator or the SED Office of Facilities Planning at: emscfp@mail.nysed.gov or 518-474-3906.

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.