

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING FACILITY ASSESSMENTS

Q: Where can I find the facility assessment of my school?

A: Reports of facility assessments can be found on the CPS website, www.cps.edu, on each school's profile page. From the school's profile page, under the **Downloads** tab, in the area entitled "Building," two facility assessment reports are linked: 1) a School Assessment, which is a summary report of the assessment findings; and 2) a Detailed Assessment, which contains all of the detailed raw data summarized in the School Assessment.

For a more detailed explanation of how assessors ranked different features and how the assessments were conducted, you may consult the *CPS Guide to Biennial Facility Assessments* on the CPS Facilities Standards webpage at:

http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/Policies_and_guidelines/Pages/facilitystandards.aspx.

Note: The current guide will also be updated at the same we publish the new assessments.

Q: When were facilities assessed?

A: The School Assessments that will be updated on the school profile pages on approximately January 14, 2016 were assessed between March 2014 and December 2015. The exact date a particular school was visited can be found in the School Assessment footer at the bottom of the page.

Q: What is the purpose of these assessments?

A: There are three main purposes of these assessments: 1) to record details about the facility and its built-in features & systems (e.g., square footage, number and types of rooms, types of mechanical systems); 2) to rate the condition of those features and systems; and 3) to estimate a cost for any repair or replacement work, specific to that line item, needed within the next several years.

Q: How often does CPS assess each school facility?

A: State law requires CPS to assess each school facility at least once every other year. The date of each assessment can be found in the footer at the bottom of each School Assessment page. The information in the School Assessment is accurate as of the date of the assessment, but may have since changed.

Q: Who actually assessed each facility?

A: In early 2014, CPS issued a request for proposals for architectural/engineering firms to perform the 2014-15 facility assessments. From this competitively bid process, CPS hired two firms -- EMG and Jacobs Project Management. Those companies provided teams of experienced building professionals with a range of specialties (e.g., architectural, mechanical). A team visited each school campus and recorded information into a CPS database. The firms performed quality control reviews of their data before submitting it to CPS.

Q: How do the assessors gather their information?

A: These assessment teams visit each school campus, interview the school engineer and walk through the entire building and site. During their walk-throughs, the assessment teams visually identify all significant features present in each room/space and record relevant details about those features (e.g., square footage of rooms, flooring material, types of writing surfaces). The assessors then rate the condition of the features and systems by the extent to which they need repair or replacement in the next several years.

Q: How do the assessors rank each facility feature or system?

A: Assessors rate the conditions of features and systems by visual observation. They generally do not test operability of every feature – for instance, they do not open windows or turn on air conditioners; nor do they break into walls, ceilings or floors to test or investigate. For information regarding operability or significant problems that cannot be discovered visually, the assessors request that the Building Engineer complete an initial survey, and they interview school Engineers if available at the time of the assessment.

Assessors observe and rate the condition of each item or system on a 7-point rating scale -- 7 reflecting the highest (best) score, and 1 reflecting the lowest (worst) score. In general, the following rank definitions are used, however exact definitions may vary depending on the item/system. Greater detail on each item/system's rank can be found in the *CPS Guide to Biennial Facility Assessments* on the CPS Facilities Standards webpage at:

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Rank 7: The item/system is new or in good condition and no work is required.

Rank 6: The item/system requires general cleaning and/or routine maintenance.

Rank 5: The item/system requires repairs and has not reached the end of its serviceable life.

Rank 4: The item/system has reached its expected useful life, but is still fully operational. CPS will maintain until replacement occurs.

Rank 3: The item/system has surpassed its expected useful life and has limited operability. CPS will maintain until replacement occurs.

Rank 2: The item/system has surpassed its expected useful life and has low or no operability. CPS will maintain until replacement occurs.

Rank 1: The item's/system's failure leads to an immediate life safety condition for occupants or to the potential of an uninhabitable facility. **When an assessor identifies an item/system that meets this condition, they are required to contact the Facilities Department immediately for further investigation and resolution.**

The assessors' focus is on the *functional* condition of the items or systems, not any aesthetic qualities (e.g., mismatched paint or stains) unless those aesthetic issues are contributing to an item's functionality (e.g., a large water stain on a ceiling may be evidence of a leak).

Q: How can I get more detail on how each of the rankings was determined?

A: Summary Report rankings are composites of the rankings for each individual feature, where those features are appropriate to aggregate. Each Summary Report is accompanied by a Detailed Report, which shows every individual rating supporting the Summary Report's composite. In addition, guidance showing how rankings are applied in different types of systems can be found in the *CPS Guide to Biennial Facility Assessments* on the CPS Facilities Standards webpage.

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Q: Do the assessments show all of the possible facility-related needs of a school? For instance, do they show whether a school is overcrowded, needs air conditioning or needs a space like a playground or another computer lab?

A: No. The assessments are focused only on existing building features and systems. The assessors do not review space utilization (over- or under-crowding) or possible programmatic needs like labs or playgrounds. They assess the condition of any air conditioning systems that already exist in a building

and make note of temperature problems, but do not make recommendations about adding air conditioning where it does not currently exist.

All of these additional needs are evaluated directly by CPS in its programmatic and capital planning processes rather than by third-party assessors in the facility assessment process.

Q: Was Americans with Disabilities Act compliance assessed in these reports?

A: ADA-specific features that already existed in a school building on the date of the assessment – such as elevators, ramps and platform lifts -- were assessed with regard to their condition. In addition, information was provided by the assessors and used by the CIP Team to determine each schools current level of accessibility. An explanation of the terms Usable, First Floor Usable and Not Accessible, will be provided. The current intent is to update the status currently found on the School Profile Page to reflect this new terminology.

Q: When will CPS replace the features with lower rankings?

A: Features that receive the lowest ranking (1) are reported to CPS and repaired or replaced immediately. Features receiving the higher ranks (5-7) either need no work or need work that is generally implemented by school engineers or facility managers on a regular schedule. Other needs (ranks 2-4) are evaluated and prioritized for CPS' multi-year capital improvement program. Many of those features are currently functional and, with on-going maintenance, can continue to function well into the future, even though the manufacturer's estimated useful life span may have elapsed. Other features are repaired and maintained as necessary until they can be replaced. CPS annually reviews all of its district-wide capital needs, and, in light of its limited capital funds, selects from those that are in the most urgent need of replacement for its 1- or 5-year capital plans.

Q: Is there an overall ranking of the condition of each school facility? Could I just average all of the rankings on the summary sheet to create an overall ranking?

A: No. It would not be appropriate to average rankings of different systems, because some systems, and some items within systems, are more critical to the proper functioning of a school facility than others.

Q: Does the total amount listed at the bottom of the report (Total Assessed Campus Need) equal everything CPS or a school community would need to raise to bring a school into perfect condition?

A: No. First, the Cost column does not reflect all the funds that would be necessary to replace entire systems, it endeavors to provide a cost to simply replace the line item, independent of the system it supports. The costs estimated by the assessors reflect only basic minimums for each item. Actual replacement projects include -- depending on how the projects are designed and timed and how much work is included -- destructive testing, environmental needs, discovered conditions, and additional work triggered by building codes or accessibility requirements. Second, as stated above, the School Assessment does not include any cost estimates for the addition of features not already in a particular facility, such as programmatic improvements, school-wide ADA compliance, air conditioning, space reconfiguration or construction to alleviate overcrowding.

Q: I disagree with some of the assessment's findings about the condition of my school. What should I do?

A: If you believe that an assessment ranking is in error or that conditions have changed since the time of the assessment, let CPS know by contacting your school principal. If you are a school principal, inform your school engineer and/or district Facility Manager, who will work with the CPS assessment team to either correct the information, or note it for the next assessment. If you believe a situation exists that

poses an immediate threat to life safety, contact your school principal or district Lead Facility Manager or Facility Manager immediately.

You are also welcome to participate in public hearings in conjunction with the release of the next CPS capital budget later in 2016. Further, each facility will be assessed again in the 2016/17 round of assessments to update any conditions. School principals and engineers will be contacted prior to scheduling each assessment.

Q: How can I get more information about the condition of a CPS facility?

A: If you need information about a CPS school facility that is not included in the School Assessment, contact the CPS Department of Facilities. If you or the principal need more technical guidance, the principal can contact the CPS Department of Facilities at 773-553-2900, where they will be connected with a technical specialist.