

**GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW AND APPROVAL
OF CAPITAL PROJECTS FOR STUDENTS
WITH DISABILITIES**

I. School-Age-Only Projects and Combined School-Age/Preschool Projects

A. Guidelines for State review and approval of [applications for capital projects](#).

All applications for capital projects must be put in writing to their VESID Special Education and Quality Assurance Office and the Rate Setting Unit. The application must include line drawings of existing and proposed facilities with square footages listed for each room, cost estimates that include all estimated construction and incidental costs, current enrollment data and student staffing ratios. Additionally, documentation of health/safety issues or violations, building code non-compliance, and/or non-compliance with accessibility requirements must be provided to justify the need for the proposed project.

- The agency will be notified by the RSU if any additional information is needed to review the project application.
- Project plans will be reviewed by the RSU, VESID Special Education and Quality Assurance Office and the Office of Facilities Planning.
- The agency will be notified in writing of the capital project cost that is approved by the New York State Division of the Budget and will be considered for reimbursement in future tuition rates.

[Notes¹: During the construction phase of the capital project, only loan interest and amortization of closing costs will be included in the tuition rate. After the school takes occupancy of the building, depreciation of the total capital project will be included.]

B. Guidelines for development of applications for capital projects.

All proposed projects will be reviewed to determine the adequacy and appropriateness of services and program space to meet the educational needs of the students with disabilities. Prior to incurring any obligation, it is recommended that the agency receives notification of the approved capital project costs that will be included as part of future tuition rates.

Before capital projects¹ are approved for education funding for students with disabilities, it must be determined that current education space is not being reallocated to non-education programs causing a lack of appropriate space for the education programs.

¹Capital projects refer to construction, renovation and acquisition of real property for educational purposes, including administrative and ancillary space and facilities used to support educational functions.

- . Administrative space may be approved in buildings to be constructed or renovated.
- . Existing education areas may also be converted to administrative space when new education facilities are being constructed.

Note: Where another state agency also has oversight responsibility for the applying program, the Department will confer with such other supervising agency prior to approving any application to construct administrative and/or other shared space.

1) Room Sizes for Special Education Classrooms

15:1 - approximately 770 square feet

12:1+1 - approximately 770 square feet

8:1+1 - approximately 550 square feet

6:1+1 - approximately 450 square feet

12:1+4 - approximately 900 square feet

Resource Room - approximately 300 square feet

Preschool Programs - 50 square feet per student or 60 square feet per student for classroom serving students who are non-ambulatory

The guidelines for preschool programs will be applied with the expectation that classrooms will serve a maximum of 12 students. The square footage requirement for preschool students includes space for a variety of recreational and instructional activities. Consideration will be given to less than 50 square feet per student if other areas of the building have been allocated, outside of the special education classroom, for such activities.

Note: For classrooms which are planned for use by more than one class, size should accommodate the largest requirement.

2) Specialized Areas

. Physical Education Space

While Department requirements are applicable, physical education space for secondary level students recommended for a building with an enrollment of 500 or less may be exceeded based on the programmatic needs of the students to be served and the physical education and recreation program planned by the school. These dimensions may also be exceeded for schools involved in interscholastic sports.

The construction of swimming pools may be considered only in those instances where the development of a pool is necessary to meet the programmatic needs of the population served. This relates to programs serving students with multiple disabilities who are unable to access community pools, unable to adequately utilize other recreational areas, and require the pool for therapeutic purposes.

Library

For secondary level students, a library or media center of up to 1,500 feet may be developed. Dimensions are based on the projected enrollment and the number of students to use this room at any one time. This guideline may be exceeded based on the specialized needs of the population to be served. For elementary level students, library space of up to 900 square feet may be developed based on enrollment and planned use of space.

Art

Art rooms of 800 to 900 square feet may be developed for use by classes of 15:1, 12:1+1 or 12:1+4. Dimensions of 500 to 700 square feet are recommended for classes of 8:1+1 and 6:1+1. Additional classrooms may be needed based on enrollment.

Industrial Arts

Industrial Arts rooms of between 800 and 1,500 square feet may be developed based on the proposed purpose of the space (e.g., an automotive shop normally requires more area than an electrical shop).

Home Economics

Home Economics rooms of 800 to 1,000 square feet may be developed for use by classes of 15:1, 12:1+1 or 12:1+4. Dimensions for Home Economics classrooms for 8:1+1 and 6:1+1 classes may have less square footage based on planned use of space.

Science (Laboratory Rooms)

Science rooms for laboratory instruction of approximately 900 square feet in addition to classroom space may be developed for classes of between 12 and 15 students. Dimensions for laboratory space for classes of 6 to 8 students is recommended at approximately 600 - 700 square feet.

Music

Music rooms of 770 square feet for classes of 15:1, 12:1+1 and 8:1+1 or 450 square feet for classes of 6:1+1 and 900 square feet for classes of 12:1+4 may be developed.

Storage

Storage space may be included in school building plans for general storage areas and storage within classrooms such as Art, Home Economics, Music, Science Laboratory and Industrial Arts.

Related Services

A determination on the amount of space allocated for related services should be based on the number of staff and students using the room, activities to be conducted (group or individual speech therapy, counseling, physical therapy, etc.) and equipment to be used.

Multi-Purpose Rooms

Other spaces may be developed. However, consideration must be given to using the following areas for multiple purposes (e.g., gym with stage for use as auditorium, cafeteria with stage for use as auditorium, etc.). Size is based on student enrollment and/or the proposed use of the space, such as Auditorium, Cafeteria, and remedial rooms or Music practice rooms.

Administration Space

Administration space is determined based on the functions required to be conducted in the school building and the amount of staff using the space.

Final Determination

In determining the appropriate number of classrooms to be included in the school building, the following factors should be considered:

- . Student enrollment;
- . Number of class size configurations and the number of students in each class;
- . Proposed scheduling of classroom use;
- . Number of staff for school building;
- . Multiple use of classroom space and specialty area space.

II. Preschool- Only Projects

- A. All applications for capital projects for preschool only programs must be submitted via the “[Approved Preschool Special Education Program Modification Requests](#)” process. Preschool programs considering a capital project, a change in program location or adding a new site or deleting an existing site should contact their Regional Associate for further guidance on the required procedures.

The “Approved Preschool Special Education Program Modification Requests” forms and instructions are available from the Department’s P-12 website at www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/applications/ or from the link to the SED Rate Setting Unit’s webpage at www.oms.nysed.gov/rsu/home.

- B. Please be advised that cost screen waivers will not be approved with respect to capital projects involving preschool-only space.