



# School Building Projects Advisory Council Meeting Agenda

December 8, 2014, 1pm

*Legislative Office Building, Room 1B, 210 Capitol Ave., Hartford, CT*

## Agenda items

1. Call to order by Chair
2. Minutes of September 30, 2014 meeting. *Page 2*
3. Testimony from stakeholder groups. *Page 6*
4. Administrative progress. *Page 7*
5. *Item withdrawn.*
6. Possible new discussion items. *Page 8*
7. Date and time of next meeting.

## Item placed on the table

Minutes of June 19, 2014 meeting. *Page 11*

## Other materials

1. Letter from CCM, October 17, 2014. *Page 14*
2. Letter to CASBO regarding September 5, 2014 letter from CASBO. *Page 17*
3. Letter from CASBO, November 1, 2014. *Page 19*

Agenda Item 2. Minutes of September 30, 2014 meeting.

School Building Projects Advisory Council  
**DRAFT Meeting Minutes**

September 30, 2014, 2:00pm

Legislative Office Building, Room 1B

Members Present
Pasquale "Bud" Salemi, Chair Gian-Carl Casa Sara Bronin Antonio Iadarola

Members Absent
Lou Casolo John Woodmansee

Attendance – Staff
Craig Russell David Barkin Jenna Padula Jason Crisco Timothy O'Brien

Attendance – Departmental representatives
William M. Turley, Area Coordinator, School Safety Program, DEMHS

**Meeting Business:**

Meeting called to order by Chair Salemi at 2:08pm.

Minutes of June 19, 2014 Meeting
<b>Motion</b> (Casa) to adopt the draft minutes. <b>Motion</b> to table (Bronin/Iadarola). <b>Motion approved.</b> <b>Item tabled.</b>

Agenda Item 3.a. regarding site selection and site plan review process
Russell discussed the presentation materials for Item 3.a., and noting these staff recommendations:



1. Site Analysis should be performed on all school construction projects, except for those projects that are exclusively interior renovation or for those projects where site disturbance is limited to project activities.
2. Where applicable, Site Analysis Form completion should be a requirement of the School Construction Grant Application process and be made a part of the school construction grant application checklist.
3. Site analysis prior to grant application submission is consistent with new SSIC standards.

Discussion occurred on the report (Bronin, Iadarola, Russell) regarding the necessity of altering the application form(s) presented on the website.

Agenda Item 3.b. regarding the school construction grant application submission process and the building plan review process

Russell discussed the presentation materials for Item 3.b., and noting these staff recommendations:

1. The PREP meeting should occur prior to the submission of the school construction grant application and should be included on the grant application checklist as a requirement in submitting a school construction grant application. PREP meetings could be changed from district-by-district meetings to regular monthly meetings with as many districts as choose to attend. Earlier in the process, PREP meetings would serve as informational for districts at the beginning of the process.
2. Site analysis should be complete prior to the submission of a grant application and the introduction of the site plan analysis form should take place at the PREP meeting.
3. The minimum standard submission of design documents to be considered for a school construction grant application should be Schematic Design.
4. The cost estimate submitted as part of the school construction grant application process should be based on Schematic Design.
5. A plan review meeting should be held at the completion of Design Development. Currently, the PCT is not held until final design.
6. Construction documents (100% completion) should be submitted upon completion for an in-house review.
  - a. In-house review of construction documents would primarily be done to ensure compliance with Chapter 173 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) – Public School Building Projects, and the DCS Regulations Concerning School Construction Grants.
7. Utilize standard ICC checklist (w/ CT supplements) at final review for code compliance review.
  - a. Code compliance review would be limited to standard requirements for public safety, which include Connecticut State Building Code Chapters 3-9 and Chapter 23.
    - i. Included with the construction document submission should be a completed ICC standard checklist with modifications to include Connecticut amendments. The Plan Review Record (PRR) should include summary of the dialog between the design team and local officials having jurisdiction regarding the issues of nonconformance and actions taken to remedy the issue.
    - ii. A cover letter should accompany the submission of the ICC checklist and PRR Site stating that all issues of nonconformance have been addressed. This letter should be signed by the municipal fire marshal, building official, health official and ADA official.

Barkin added further information on code review and having more complete code compliance submissions by the project architect at PCT meetings.

Discussion occurred on the staff recommendations (Iadarola/Russell/Salemi/Barkin/Bronin), including:

- differing experiences at PCT meetings, based on the quality of a district's consultants
- Schematic Design and its definition, including whether municipalities would be reimbursed for this, should their referenda fail
- how the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) process requires Schematic Design and cost estimates based on those documents before local bonding authorization

- the sense that moving the PREP and PCT meetings to earlier in the process, before final design, makes sense, but that there should be more discussion on the design recommendations and that there should be more DCS staffing to support these functions.

**Agenda Item 3.c. regarding cost reporting and uniform standard for cost estimates**

Russell discussed the presentation materials for Item 3.c., noting the staff recommendation to amend the current policy to include all school construction projects regardless of construction cost and change the uniform standard to Uniformat II, Level 4.

Discussion occurred on this agenda item (Salemi/Russell), noting the difficulties SBPAC has experienced with obtaining cost data from municipalities and the fact that the State has accurate school construction cost data in Uniformat from recent state technical high school projects.

**Agenda Item 4.a. regarding standard specifications**

Barkin discussed the presentation materials for Item 4.a., noting the staff recommendations to

1. Hire a multi-disciplined consulting team – Architects / Engineers / Ed Planners.
2. Create a “Guidelines for School Construction,” including Standard Specifications.
3. Develop multiple space programs for schools of differing sizes and educational levels.
4. Provide graphic and written descriptions of model learning spaces.
5. Develop quality standards that act as a minimum standard and reflect a 50 year life cycle.
6. Allow flexibility in the standards to respond to individual district needs allowing for innovation with educational pedagogy.

Barkin elaborated that standard specifications would work with a maximum reimbursable cost per square foot in that the specifications would inform the level of the maximum cost and that the two would provide local flexibility within clear parameters: the standards providing a minimum for educational need and the maximum reimbursable cost limiting overall cost.

Discussion occurred on this agenda item (Iadarola/Barkin/Salemi/Bronin), noting

- need for some standardization of design for guidance to school districts
- the context of how this is a practical approach to the generalized call for “model blueprints”
- how the MSBA is reconsidering its “model schools” program
- the consultancy to create draft specifications and the timeline for that work
- how state policy (per capita space allowance) is onerous on school districts in renovation projects, due to an infrastructure built for a much larger statewide student population

**Discussion regarding consultancies**

Discussion occurred in consultancies related to the work under discussion (Bronin/Salemi/Casa/Barkin/Iadarola). Casa/Bronin asked about the consultant contracting process and whether the Council or DAS has the budget for and hires the consultants. Salemi stated that the funding is in the DAS budget and will research and provide the Council with more information. Iadarola expressed desire for a clear scope of work for consultants and the observation that the first report did not meet all expectations. Salemi discussed difficulties the consultant faced in obtaining data, due to lack of availability from municipalities.

**Agenda Item 4.b. regarding standard contracts**

Padula discussed the presentation materials for Item 4.b., the recommendation for a consultancy to prepare standard contracts in accordance with CGS Sec. 10-292(d), and offered the staff recommendation that  
 The SBPAC should consider the benefits of having such standardized contracts and whether they warrant a legislative change to require their use or to provide an incentive to encourage their use.



Discussion occurred on the agenda item and the potential Council action (Bronin/Salemi), noting that there should be a public comment period in the process of promulgating these contracts, having Council Public Hearings on this matter, having the contracts establish clear interrelationships between different types of contracting on school construction projects (project management, A/E/Design, General Contracting/Construction Manager At-Risk) and how standard contracts can improve such things as the change order process by standardization.

**Item 4.c.i. regarding a comparative analysis of the school construction processes in CT, NYC and MA**

Russell introduced a chart, "Comparing School Construction Programs" and offered it for Council members' review.

Council members (Bronin/Iadarola) discussed the chart, noting that it was a very useful synthesis of prior meetings.

**Item 4.c.ii. regarding program administration funding**

Russell discussed the presentation materials for Item 4.c.ii., noting the staff recommendation to:

- Create a special fund from which school construction grant program staff and administration would be paid, generated from school construction grant funds (capital funds).

Discussion occurred on this agenda item (Bronin/O'Brien) regarding what entities and what funds pay for school construction program staffing in New York City and Massachusetts.

**Agenda Item 5 regarding a report on stakeholder meetings**

O'Brien presented the "School Construction Policy Report, September 30, 2014, Update on stakeholder outreach", noting the work to build lines of communication in support of the work of the SBPAC and DAS in creating new school construction policies.

Discussion occurred on the agenda item (Bronin/Salemi) about having Public Hearings, with stakeholders presenting their commentary.

**Adjournment**

**Motion** (Bronin/Iadarola) to adjourn. **Motion approved.**

Chair Salemi declared the meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.



### Agenda Item 3. Testimony from stakeholder groups.

On agenda for December 8, 2014:

- AIA
- AGC
- CASBO
- CCM
- COST
- FFC

Topics considered:

1. Design guidelines (standard specifications)
2. Standard contracts
3. Schematic design
4. Plan review process

#### Agenda Item 4. Administrative progress.

1. Site plan review/ED053
2. Design guidelines (standard specifications)
3. Standard contracts
4. Uniformat use and new database system



## Agenda Item 6. Possible new discussion items.

The following are items presented to SBPAC members for consideration at a future meeting.

### 1. Condition Assessments and Capital Asset Planning

**Recommendation #9 (pg. 11, 13 and 17 of the Report by School Building Projects Advisory Council, February 7, 2014) – Require districts to implement an enhanced life-cycle cost study, relating to structure, infrastructure, and finishes, using a standardized state-wide reporting format.**

Having a statewide assessment of the condition of school facilities is not a new idea in Connecticut. The ED050 form generates information that is officially about facility condition assessment. However, this information is inadequate for facility planning. A more detailed system for facility condition assessment is needed.

New York City regularly assesses the condition of its entire stock of school facilities using a specialized assessment software module. This information is used every year to update their five-year school capital plan. While New York City does have the advantage of being able to administer their school construction program as a single municipality, it is useful to see how a comprehensive facility management system of New York City's size is able to function.

Massachusetts has a political structure that more closely resembles Connecticut's. In that state, during the process of creating their current system, the newly-formed Massachusetts School Building Authority conducted a one-time statewide school condition assessment to inform their strategic policy-making. While the MSBA has the information from this statewide assessment available to them in their decision-making, as a practical matter, they primarily use the facility assessment information for school facilities submitted by school districts with their "statements of interest" (pre-application forms) for school construction grant funding.

Thus, while New York City does a citywide prioritization of all of its facilities to take cognizance of all school facilities in its capital planning, the Massachusetts authority uses its statement-of-interest-based assessments to prioritize, mainly just among the school facilities for which statements of interest have actually been submitted.

These assessments of facility need, in both cases, are combined with assessments of educational need – such as whether there is a need to increase the amount of classroom space or make changes to accommodate newer standards of education – in an effective statewide planning process for school building funding.



2. Consideration of recommending a change in the deadline for obtaining local bonding authorization

**Recommendation #6 (pg. 15 and 17 of the Report by School Building Projects Advisory Council, February 7, 2014) – Require or encourage standardized procedures in for school districts construction management process.**

One of the goals of the review of the state school construction grant program is to identify elements of the process that impose burdens on school districts and municipalities that do not serve a sufficient purpose to justify them. One such burden is CGS Sec. 10-283(d), which provides, in part,

No application for a school building project shall be accepted by the Commissioner of Administrative Services on or after July 1, 2002, unless the applicant has secured funding authorization for the local share of the project costs prior to application.

This inflexibly requires, by statute, that applications for school construction grant funding may only be submitted to the state after local bonding is approved. This imposes a significant burden on municipalities.

Many school districts conduct bonding referenda at the same time as November elections. This means that, after referendum approval, they have to wait until midway through the following year for the state to start processing their applications. They then have to wait nearly another year after that for final approval of their application by the legislature. So the need to have local bonding approval in place by the application deadline on June 30<sup>th</sup> is a significant part of the fact that a local bond referendum may occur nearly two years before the legislature approves of a school project.

While this statutory requirement is intended to ensure that there is firm local funding commitment before the state considers a commitment of state funds, the delay that it imposes on the process makes cost estimates developed for referendum approval significantly aged by the time construction can begin. This, of course, adds to the cost of projects and may result in further delays, as projects budgets, designs or both need to be adjusted to compensate for the cost of these timetable delays. Some municipalities actually hold budget referenda on a date other than the November elections, when voter participation is generally lower, mainly so they can avoid some portion of this large timing delay.

This is a problem that comes only from the way state law is currently written. It can be remedied by changing state law to allow districts to submit their applications by June 30<sup>th</sup>, as they would now, but then allow them until December to actually gain referendum



approval of local bonding authority. This would allow municipalities to use the November general election after they submit their applications for their referendum approval. If such a school bonding proposal should, then, fail in the referendum, that project would simply be removed from the Priority List projects to be sent for legislative consideration in the following year.

Rather than having to hold a referendum, and all of the work that precedes it, months before the application deadline, this change would allow large elements of the process to actually occur parallel to application submission and consideration of it by OSF. This change would retain the primary spirit of this portion of CGS Sec. 10-283(d), because local bonding authorization would still be required before the legislature even receives the proposal. But the change would remove months of delay from the application process.

Item placed on the table.

## School Building Projects Advisory Council DRAFT Meeting Minutes

June 19, 2014, 1:30pm

Legislative Office Building, Room 1B

### Members Present

Pasquale "Bud" Salemi, Chair  
Gian-Carl Casa  
John Woodmansee  
Sara Bronin  
Antonio Iadarola

### Members Absent

Lou Casolo

### Attendance - Staff

Craig Russell  
David Barkin  
Jenna Padula  
Jason Crisco  
Timothy O'Brien

## Meeting Business:

Meeting called to order by Chair Salemi at 1:44pm.

### Welcoming of new member

Salemi introduced the newest member of the Council, John Woodmansee, the designee of the Commissioner of Education.

### Discussion regarding a legislative policy change on roof pitch

Salemi discussed the change in the state law on roof pitch requirements and the apparent \$5-8 million a year in savings produced from it.

### Update on the administrative policy change requiring Unifomat, Level 3 reporting



Salemi discussed the change in cost estimate reporting to Unifomat for projects over \$2 million and the work to apply Unifomat to all projects.

**Agenda Item 3, presentation of a report from staff on research conducted**

Salemi/Barkin/Padula discussed the research by Division of Construction Services staff following up on the February 7, 2014 SBPAC Report and summarized the contents of the member agenda packets, including discussion of

- Standard contracts and procurement processes used in Massachusetts
- The application and approval process for school construction grants in Massachusetts, including discussion of
  - statement of interest process
  - 270 day approval process
  - per square foot costs in Massachusetts being lower than in Connecticut
  - model schools and incentives offered for school districts to use them
  - competitive process with a \$500 million annual grant cap
  - a dedicated funding stream from the state sales tax
- The five year capital plan in New York City
- The capital asset management program in New York City
- The planning involved in the New Haven school construction program and their use of an owner project manager

**Agenda Item 4, presentation of a statistical report from staff**

Salemi/O'Brien discussed the statistical report by Division of Construction Services staff, including discussion of

- The limits of the data available in current state databases and the need to build a new construction cost database system
- The amount of legislative school bond authorizations (about 30%) that are in legislative notwithstanding clauses, rather than on the Priority List
- A list of the recent school construction projects
- The proportion of state bonding authorization that goes to school construction

**Agenda Item 8, discussion of strategic planning by DAS/DCS and SBPAC and regarding consultancies**

Discussion (Salemi/Bronin/Russell/Padula/Barkin/Iadarola) was conducted on the role of consultancies in the work going forward, including

- The \$650,000 in state funding for program consultancies
- What consultancies may be needed, including for
  - cost estimating database
  - capital asset management/condition assessment
- The existing ED050 form and the weakness of its facilities condition information
- Whether the consultancy for condition assessments is to do the assessments or are just the building of the new database and standards – with discussion that the initial work would be to review the needs for a new assessment system and build the survey system
- Discussion of a consultancy for the cost estimating system, which could involve
  - assessing historical data to help build a maximum cost per square foot that allows schools to reasonably be built
  - assessing the kind of data needed for a cost estimating database system
  - building the cost estimating database system
- Whether building the cost estimating database system would involve a separate consultancy from the consultancy to assess historical data
- That there is no relational database to analyze school construction cost data in digital format



- That the hiring of consultancies should be based on decisions about the changes that should be made in the school construction grant program
- That most larger municipalities already produce condition assessments
- Whether condition assessments would become a gatekeeping tool for deciding what school projects are done
  - In Massachusetts, school construction projects must resolve deficiencies found through their assessments
- A need for decisions on the policy direction the SBPAC is taking to inform decisions on what consultancies to hire, such as
  - whether condition assessments would be made part of the process, to decide whether to hire a consultant for a condition assessment system
  - whether a cost estimating system would result in a limit on costs, to decide whether to hire a consultant for a cost estimating system
  - deciding the data that is needed to build a database
- That there are administrative needs and policy mandates on DAS/DCS that require the hiring of consultants to fulfill
- That a construction cost database system would inform policymaking and administrative needs that DAS/DCS already has but cannot perform as well because the available data is inadequate
- That there is already a statutory requirement for a maximum reimbursable cost per square foot that a cost estimating system is needed to implement effectively

Discussion (Iadarola/Salemi/Bronin/Russell) was conducted on the process for the Council to follow up with the recommendations in the February 7, 2014 Report, creating greater detailed recommended changes in the system for school construction funding, including

- Need for accurate and better cost estimating data to inform policymaking going forward
- That data has already been submitted under the new rule requiring Uniformat, Level 3 for projects over \$2 million, but no process exists for recording, storing and analyzing this data.
- That the cost estimating database should focus on data going forward because of the inadequacy, large variances and anomalies in data from the past
- That the consultant scopes of work should be presented to the SBPAC
- That DAS/DCS hires the consultants that provide assistance in the work of the SBPAC
- That the purpose of this SBPAC meeting has been to present research to SBPAC to prepare the Council for the policymaking discussion going forward
- That decisions should be made about the direction to be recommended in building a new program, including what systems from other jurisdictions should be used as models, based on knowledge about deficiencies with the existing system in Connecticut
- that a summary can be assembled of the research presented
- that recommendations will be presented at the next meeting, developed from the research conducted

#### Adjournment

**Motion (Bronin) to adjourn. Motion approved.**

Chair Salemi declared the meeting adjourned.

## Other materials.

### 1. Letter from CCM, October 17, 2014.



**President:** Matthew B. Galligan, Town Manager of South Windsor • **First Vice President:** Mark D. Boughton, Mayor of Danbury • **Second Vice President:** Susan S. Bransfield, First Selectwoman of Portland • **Treasurer:** Robert M. Congdon, First Selectman of Preston • **Secretary:** John A. Elsesser, Town Manager of Coventry

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**Past Presidents:** William A. Finch, Mayor of Bridgeport; Mary A. Glassman, First Selectman of Simsbury; Elizabeth C. Paterson, Mayor of Mansfield; Herbert C. Rosenthal, Former First Selectman of Newtown; Stephen T. Cassano, Selectman of Manchester

**CEO:** Bruce A. Wollschlager

October 17, 2014

Pasquale (Bud) Salemi  
Deputy Commissioner  
Department of Administrative Services  
165 Capital Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Deputy Commissioner Salemi:

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) commends the work that the School Buildings Projects Advisory Council has done to research and identify opportunities to improve the school building construction process. We remain committed to working collaboratively to enhance our current system for the benefit of both the State and municipalities.

Towns and cities appreciate their partnership with the State in school construction. Local governments in Connecticut have difficulty affording school building and renovation projects on their own as a result of their forced reliance on property tax revenues and the relatively small size of school districts. In many communities, as school age enrollments rise, technology needs grow, families move to previously small towns, and public expectations for quality schools increase - thus need for new school infrastructure is greater.

Improving our local education institutions will continue to require a strong partnership between the State and local government. CCM appreciates the opportunity to discuss several of the Council's recommendations with the shared goal of enhancing the process.

➤ **Grant Application Process and Site Analysis:**

CCM believes that any changes should benefit both the municipalities and the State. For instance, the recommendation that would require formal evaluations of the site conditions, such as ensuring no inland/wetland, FEMA designated flood areas, or historical sites - before an applications is submitted – could provide a cost savings to ensure no cost overrun or surprises later in the process. This change to site analysis may be beneficial for all parties.



However, other recommendations to streamline and enhance the current application process, while well intended, would primarily benefit the State and may impose undue burdens on local government. For instance, the recommendation that would require school districts to conduct formal and full-scale site and building investigations before the completion of the grant applications, specifically the need for a 35% completed schematic prior to submitting the application, could be problematic. If resources and funding are required to conduct this formal investigation, and if the site or plans do not move forward, municipalities would be burdened with those costs.

CCM understands that accurately capturing costs before administrative or referendum approval would prevent excess costs and review however, the Council's recommendation could create an unnecessary financial burden. To this end, CCM recommends that such costs be reimbursable if a plan is not approved or completed.

➤ **Model Blueprints:**

Each municipality in the State is uniquely different. Therefore, there are concerns with Department of Construction Services (DCS) developing model blueprints or, alternatively, design and construction standards, for new school building projects.

Local officials know what works best for their particular community, therefore CCM would instead support a list of "best practices" as a reference that the State could develop to assist municipalities with different stages of the school construction process. In addition, there may be examples of rooms and areas specifications depending on the type of school.

➤ **State Consultation:**

In order to enhance the current process, CCM supports assigning additional State staff to assist municipalities. In particular, CCM supports the establishment of a school construction division within DCS to assist school districts with planning, design, and construction management. However, we caution the use of any funding that is intended for school building projects to be used as a source of revenue for additional staff. We further recommend that such critical State support should be funded above and beyond what is earmarked for school building projects.

➤ **Uniform School Construction Contracts/Management Process:**

The concept of utilizing uniform contracts and construction management process is intriguing approach that could result in some unintended consequences. For instance, some of the initial concerns with this proposal is that it may conflict with local charters. There are also concerns how change orders or unique situations would affect the overall contracting process. In addition, the management process for construction projects is sometimes dictated by local requirements, therefore a statewide standard would run contrary to current practice.

CCM recommends that the State develop best practices and model contract terms. These can serve as a guide, reference and examples for municipalities to use and maneuver the grant application and school building construction process.

➤ **Maximum Reimbursable Cap:**

General costs of building projects do fluctuate depending on a variety of factors. These costs are equalized so that property and income-poor towns receive higher percentage of State support than other towns. Therefore, CCM opposes a maximum reimbursement cap on the



cost of construction, measured in cost per square foot for eligible space. This may negatively impact a particular municipality over another.

If there a cap is imposed, CCM implores the DCS to ensure these numbers are (1) dynamic, based on data collected on projects, primarily the average cost per square foot, for the particular type of projects from the preceding three year periods; and (2) that any cap would require a stringent review process which provides a period for public comment.

➤ **Research:**

CCM recommends that the Council and DCS continue to research and review how other States address this issue. We understand that you and DCS staff have reviewed the process in Massachusetts and New York City. However, that may not be an appropriate comparison to Connecticut's political cultural, and taxing landscape.

Aid for school construction is a vital part of the State's education finance system. Despite aggressive building and renovation programs in many districts over the past 10-15 years, many towns and cities have yet to upgrade facilities as a majority of schools were built before 1970. Moreover, continued growth in pre-K programs and class size reduction initiatives may necessitate more new construction in some municipalities. State construction aid allows Connecticut communities to rebuild and develop new educational infrastructure.

Again, CCM appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback regarding some of these proposals. We hope to work with DCS and the Council to make necessary improvements that are beneficial for both the State and municipalities. In the end, the winners are Connecticut's students and their futures.

If you have any questions please contact Mike Muszynski or me at (203) 498-3000.

Sincerely,

Ronald Thomas  
Director of Public Policy & Advocacy  
Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

## 2. Letter to CASBO regarding September 5, 2014 letter from CASBO.

November 17, 2014

Sharon Bruce  
Connecticut Association of School Business Officials  
11 High Gate Ln.  
West Hartford, CT 06107

Dear Sharon,

Thank you for your letter of September 5, 2014. Your input, suggestions and discussion of the issues are insightful and are offered from precisely the perspective we sought to gain. Your letter has been the focus of considerable proactive discussion. We are appreciative of your participation and certainly look forward to continuing to work with CASBO as we proceed.

Please find below our comments on the issues you identified. We hope to continue this discourse in an effort to refine each of the actions we plan to improve Connecticut's public school construction process for all parties associated with it.

1. Recommend that an owner's representative be hired at the very start of the project (greater than \$10 million) to assist in hiring of architect, engineer, CM etc. \*

We agree with the recommendation for an owner's project manager on school construction projects. We would offer that the amount over which these should be required should be \$5 million and that the OPM should be hired early enough to assist the school districts in preparing their applications for state funding. OPMs should be pre-qualified to participate in State funded Projects.

2. Recommend that a design professional develop schematic designs with specific cost estimates to be included in referendum. \*  
\* These steps would assist in bringing a better-documented design and project estimate forward. However, these steps can be costly to towns/schools, if the project fails in referendum. As incentive, the state could agree to reimburse for these costs if the referendum fails or allow them to be added to the eligible costs for reimbursement once a project passes referendum.

We intend to continue our discussion on how to proceed with the concept of a requirement for projects (and their estimates) to be at schematic design stage prior to taking a proposal for local bonding approval. We agree that more highly defined documentation of design will bring a better understanding of the project and the district's need to accomplish it. A cost estimate with a higher level of integrity should obviate any need to return to the electors for additional funds or to visit the notwithstanding process. This particular suggestion appears to be gaining acceptance with stakeholders as it addresses one of the most difficult issues in the process. We should continue to discuss how to implement this strategy.

3. Recommend that an audit be performed after 50% of design is completed (scope, cost and size are known at this point) This would provide for a review and guidance before construction begins and provide time to make changes so as to avoid costly adjustments well after project is completed.

Your recommendation for an audit to be performed at 50% design completion is very much in line with our own plan review process proposals. OSF will move PREP meetings to a point prior to an application being submitted, and PCT meetings (or the equivalent of them) will be moved from 100% completion to 60% completion. We are in agreement with your observations on this point and we hope that the changes being made accomplish our goals.



4. Expedite the project closing process. Require that all original documents remain in the BOE office. Simplify and streamline change order process. This could involve online processing of change orders. New online forms should be developed to make it easier to document and approve change orders on a timely basis. Involve all players involved in the change order process (architects, CM, owners, school business officials, contractors and SFU staff etc.) to participate in such a review. Everyone benefits by streamlining this process.

DAS is hiring additional plan review staff for OSF that should address a number of workload issues, including the processing of change orders. Additionally, we continue to entertain proposals to improve the "change order" process.

5. Expedite "renovate as new" process and provide more flexibility in meeting these requirements.

The Code Upgrade component continues to be a major point of discussion in regards to "renovate as new" projects. We will continue to discuss this issue with you and others in an effort to reconcile the costs of public health and safety issues and the funding available to provide them.

6. Education and training- many schools are involved in a limited number of projects that could span decades. Therefore, clear, concise communication and guidelines are needed each step of the way.

We agree. We are at the beginning of building a process that is clear and concise and that recognizes and meets challenges and opportunities with appropriate resources to accomplish a district's goals for its students.

7. Old Change Orders- We all know that old change orders are a major problem and cause huge delays in closing a project. Many times documentation is missing; key players are gone and inconsistency is rampant. CASBO recommends that a "swat team" be assigned with the authority and flexibility to quickly address these old backlogs in a fair way. Materiality thresholds should be developed to help expedite.

A great deal of progress has been made on the legacy change order backlog. As staffing is increased, this process should eventually resolve all but current project change orders. OSF continues to make remedying this a priority.

8. Support the DAS' effort to address Form ED050. We recommend that DAS review the essential data that is truly needed and develop a streamlined approach to collect and report such data.

We appreciate your support for an improved process for facility condition assessment. We look forward to working with you to create a Capital Asset Management Plan that can be utilized by both the State and the municipalities to manage facilities with a well-planned physical and fiscal agenda.

9. Reduce and/or streamline Notwithstanding Legislation situations

A great deal of our review of the state school construction grant program is centering on the process by which grants are applied for, reviewed, approved and funded and by which school construction work then is carried out. We look forward to continuing our discussion with you on the overall process and ways that it can be made more expeditious and more efficient.

Thank you, again, for your letter. We truly appreciate your engagement in this process, and we look forward to our continuing collaboration.

My very best wishes to you and everyone in your association.

Sincerely,

Pasquale J. Salemi  
Deputy Commissioner



### 3. Letter from CASBO, November 1, 2014.



11 High Gate Lane, West Hartford, CT 06107-1010  
Phone/Fax 860.519.0023  
www.ct-asbo.org

Mr. Tim O'Brien  
Asst. To Deputy Commissioner  
Department of Administrative Services  
165 Capitol Ave. Rm. 473B  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Tim,

As we discussed, CASBO welcomes the opportunity to provide you and the School Building Project Advisory Council (SBPAC) feedback with respect to issues discussed at the Council's meeting on September 30, 2014. I briefed the CASBO Board and liaisons about the issues discussed by the SBPAC and CASBO has the following comments:

1. **Site Selection and Site Plan Review Process** - CASBO supports the idea of addressing all site issues in one form. We do recommend that flexibility be exercised with respect to this form so as not to slow down the process. Specifically, the exception for "minimum site disturbance" should be clearly defined.
2. **School Construction Grant Application and Plan Review Process** - CASBO supports to need to expedite this process and understands the value of more complete design documents and related cost estimates at the front end of the process. We, however, are concerned that districts will be required to incur significant upfront costs to comply with the proposed recommendation for a 35% schematic design and related cost estimate be included with the grant application. Therefore, we again strongly recommend that the State reimburse school districts for these upfront costs if the project fails and allow all upfront costs to be included as eligible costs for reimbursement once a project passes referendum.
3. **Cost Reporting Database/Uniform Standard for Cost Estimates** - CASBO supports the development of a dynamic cost estimating system for school construction projects and encourages the DAS to ensure that such a system be user friendly, efficient and technology advanced to allow for easy data collection, analyses and reporting. It is also important that all data collected is readily available and relevant to school districts. To this end, we recommend that the DAS involve key stakeholders in the development of this system, including the review of the data requirements. It is also important that DAS provide training and communication to all stakeholders about the system and the format used.

CASBO is concerned about the establishment of a maximum reimbursable cost per square foot. We again stress the need for flexibility. Construction in urban areas is very different than in rural areas. Also market conditions can vary greatly, depending on the construction climate at the time of bidding.

4. **Standard Specifications** - CASBO would be strongly opposed to a "one size fits all" dictated specifications for school construction. The establishment of minimum quality standards makes sense and the concept for providing program guidelines and suggestions for learning spaces are helpful as long as they are flexible, innovative, technology focused and readily adaptable for future changes. Any such guidelines must also address Special Education mandates.

CASBO also recommends that the DAS revise/update or even eliminate the Standard Space calculations that are currently in place. These standards are outdated and, in any cases, not relevant to the flexible space needs for future schools.

5. **Standard Contracts** - CASBO supports the idea the development of a family of contracts by the State that integrate all aspects of design, construction management, owner's representative services and other professional services. We support the idea of incenting school districts to use these comprehensive contracts rather than requiring their use.
6. **Program Administration Funding** - CASBO would be supportive of a funding mechanism that was added to the State bonding commitment used to support school construction. We would be opposed to any funding mechanism that passed the costs of this staffing on to school districts.

As previously indicated, CASBO has extensive experience in many aspects of school facility planning, construction, change orders, closeout and grant reimbursement. We stand ready to assist you and the council in any, and all, aspects of the school building process. Please feel free to call at 860-416-3912 or email at [lenihandg11@hotmail.com](mailto:lenihandg11@hotmail.com) if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further.

David G. Lenihan  
Legislative Liaison