

Book: Denver Public Schools Board of Education Policies
Section: A - Foundations and Basic Commitments
Title: Facility Allocation Policy
Number: AG
Status: [Proposed / New]
Adopted: [February 19, 2015]

1) Policy Statement:

The Facility Allocation (FA) Policy establishes expectations for the District to evaluate facility requests and advance recommendations to the Board concerning the allocation of District facilities and other support that may be provided to meet facility needs for both new and existing schools regardless of governance type. It is understood that a perfect facility solution for all concerned stakeholders may not be possible, particularly in a resource-constrained environment. The language herein will guide the evaluation processes leading to the Superintendent's recommendation(s) to the Board, and to ensure that subsequent action by the Board is prudent, demonstrates fiscal stewardship, is aligned to the mission of the District, is consistent with district policies and state law concerning program autonomy, furthers the District's commitment that all schools shall provide equity of opportunity, responsibility, access and accountability, and aligns resources to advance achievement of the goals defined in the Denver Plan, most specifically Goal 1 calling for "Great Schools in Every Neighborhood".

The FA Policy provides principles guiding facility and resource allocation decisions and criteria aligned to the educational priorities of the District, along with other considerations in which recommendations will be based, and clarifies expectations of all schools in supporting students.

2) Principles Guiding Facility Allocation and Support Decisions:

- a) The District holds all public schools accountable using multiple sources of student performance data and information – much of which is collected and reflected in the School Performance Framework.
- b) The District seeks to preserve all resources of the District – particularly but not exclusively public operating revenues including mill levy override monies, federal funds and general funds – to the direct benefit of students educated within the District and in support of all public schools within the District.
- c) The District is committed to ensuring appropriate community engagement occurs in making school location decisions.
- d) The District commits to providing visibility to the public and Board of Education ahead of required decisions, allowing reasonable time for stakeholders to provide input.

3) Criteria to Prioritize Placement and/or Investment:

The criteria outlined here reflect the Principles above and place a premium upon academic growth and student achievement (Criteria 1). These criteria should be considered when prioritizing amongst potential facility allocation or investment choices. The criteria may be applied to new and existing schools that are seeking to locate within District facilities, or to inform assessment of acquisition of new district facilities, facility expansions, or capital plans. Criteria are listed in order of general importance, but will all be considered in making decisions.

a) Criteria #1. Academic Growth & Student Achievement:

The District shall evaluate each school that requests a district-managed facility or financial support for facilities needs based on its track record for maintaining high levels of academic growth and student achievement, as measured by the School Performance Framework (SPF), or, in the case of new schools, the track record of operating other successful schools, demonstrated leadership capability and/or the quality of its application. Other measures beyond the SPF may also be used in evaluating the academic performance for schools that are targeting a priority need of the District by meeting the academic needs of an underserved student population.

b) **Criteria #2. Alignment to Priority District Needs:**

The District shall evaluate each school that requests a district-managed facility or financial support for facilities needs based on its alignment with the needs and priorities identified in the District's Strategic Regional Analysis (SRA), and requested in the annual Call for New Quality Schools (CNQS) process (the most current versions of these documents are available online at dpsk12.org). To demonstrate alignment with District needs, a school might be:

1. Providing opportunities directly targeted at meeting the needs of an underserved student population that has been identified as a priority for the District (e.g., intensive or alternative pathways schools in a specific area of the city);
2. Proposed as a solution in an area of the District that has a significant academic performance gap, and supports an immediate need to replace a current low-performing program in the existing neighborhood;
3. Proposed as a solution in an area of the District that has been identified as needing a new school or expansion of existing capacity to meet student enrollment demand;
4. Operating as a high-performing school in an area of the District that has been identified as having significant performance gaps in the area's existing schools;
5. Working collaboratively with the District to adjust their proposed or current program or operational offering(s) to more closely align with the District/Community needs. Examples could include:
 - (i) Increased enrollment priority for students qualifying for free-and-reduced lunch,
 - (ii) Offering ECE, ELL or special education severe needs program services,
 - (iii) Offering increased services for off-track students,
 - (iv) Providing equity of access and opportunity for socio-economic integration desired by the community.

c) **Criteria #3. Enrollment Demand**

Strong enrollment demand and community support. Without regard to status as a new or existing school, demand beyond capacity may be evidenced by:

- (i) Extensive student wait lists or "intent to enroll" lists
- (ii) Petitions and/or other forms or testimony.

In the case of more than one school meeting criteria where only one option is needed based upon the SRA and CNQS, the District will provide its recommendation based upon the "best available option" defined in alignment with the above criteria as well as the supplemental considerations listed below.

d) **Supplemental Considerations:**

The District will also utilize the following considerations in providing facility and financial resource allocation recommendations to the Board:

1. Existing commitments made by the Board to specific schools or school communities;
2. Current/potential availability of district facilities and the availability of other options to meet the requested need in the geographic area;
3. Availability of General Obligation Bond (GOB) funds, which are the primary source for funding large capital purchases/improvements such as facilities;
4. The District financial status, including balance sheet capacity to finance capital expenditures;
5. Overall economic/market conditions, including access to capital markets;
6. The school's willingness and ability to contribute either upfront or ongoing funding towards the financial need;
7. The school's ability to meet ongoing financial obligations including new debt service and/or facility-use fees, and assessment of any consequential risk to the District based upon school non-payment against obligations;

8. Property/facility desirability (for acquisition/lease of existing facility or land) including location, demographics, condition and ownership structure.

In each case, these criteria will be evaluated in aggregate in evaluating the priority and ability to meet the facility need relative to available resources and other needs, and making recommendations to the Board of Education. Schools operating in District-owned or managed facilities will be responsible for paying an annual cost-based, facility-use fee.

e) Expectations of All Schools

All schools within the District, regardless of governance structure or placement in a district-owned/leased facility, have committed to providing equity of access, opportunity and responsibility for all students. As a part of this shared commitment, schools may be asked to collaborate with the District to best meet the needs of all students including:

1. Participation in a regional enrollment program (e.g., enrollment or access zone, dedicated or shared boundary,...) designed to ensure the school enrollment opportunities are made available first to intended students, and which may be required to share responsibilities amongst multiple schools in meeting the needs of students in a specific region (with consideration of Federal and State grant requirements):
 - (i) Shared responsibility for enrolling late arrivals, mid-year entry students and students who did not participate in the choice process is a high priority for all schools;
 - (ii) Potential participation in a shared transportation zone, including sharing in the cost of this service.
2. Willingness and ability to serve all students. This could include, but is not limited to:
 - (i) Serving a comparable number of special education students;
 - (ii) Hosting one or more special education center programs;
 - (iii) Providing appropriate services for English Language Learners (ELLs);
 - (iv) Closing the opportunity gap by serving an economically, culturally, gender and/or racially underserved student population and community.

4) Policy Implementation

The Board of Education directs the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee to implement this FA Policy. It is the Board's intent that this FA Policy be informed in part by "best practices and advisories" developed by the District's Collaborative Council ("CC"). At least once every four years, the Superintendent is expected to attest to the BoE that the CC has been consulted and the FA Policy is current.