

April 4, 2017

Robert Jennell, Superintendent  
SW Licking Local SD  
927 A South St  
Pataskala, OH 43062

*Sent via Email  
to: [rjennell@laca.org](mailto:rjennell@laca.org)*

### **OFCC K-12 Renovation**

Dear Mr. Jennell:

SW Licking Local School District called the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) recently to ask if the OFCC could provide an explanation, or rationale, why the OFCC prefers building new rather than renovate an existing school building. OFCC does not mandate a district replace a building if renovation costs exceed the 2/3rds renovate to replace guideline.

In the past the OFCC has participated in the renovation of existing schools. OFCC understands there may be sentiments within school districts to keep schools because of the stately appearance and the district's maintenance of those buildings. However, the additional cost to the local school district of keeping older buildings has hindered the number of renovations OFCC has participated in. Below are some of the guidelines and reasons why OFCC recommends that School Districts build new rather than renovate existing buildings:

- OFCC's 2/3rds guideline: when renovation cost meet and/or exceed 2/3rds the cost of new construction OFCC recommends replacing (i.e. long term maintenance, updated systems to current industry standards, etc.). Districts can renovate the building but may be assuming a larger financial burden should the renovation costs exceed the cost of new construction.
- Districts lose their OFCC funding partner if the cost of renovation exceeds the cost of new construction for the same area. OFCC will fund the renovation project up to the cost of a new building built to serve the student population housed in that school.
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) goals are difficult to achieve within budget due to an older building's outdated construction technique used to create the building's thermal envelope; that is the roof, walls, and floors. The Architect and Engineering team may find it difficult to balance energy efficiency, current Mechanical Code fresh air requirements, and efficiently size mechanical equipment if the existing building cannot accommodate today's Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning equipment.

- Disruption of students and staff during renovation project itself poses logistical and safety concerns for staff, students and parents. Contractors need lay down area and school functions, such as food service, may need to be temporarily rearranged.
- Reprogramming, or repurposing, of certain space may need to be considered to address changing safety and / or educational needs. Small classroom areas and entry doors that open directly into hallways are common conditions of older buildings that need to be adapted to current standards. Whether these expenses are co-funded or not, these changes place a larger financial burden on the project.
- Inherently the District and OFCC have more financial risk with renovation due to unknowns. Typically, the contingency for renovation projects is larger than new construction, 7% vs 5%. In addition, there have been instances where hazardous materials have been discovered after contractors start digging into walls creating additional costs and delays to the project after it starts.

School districts wishing to pursue renovation of a building instead of replacing does put the district in a riskier position financially. Furthermore, renovation work will not change the overall layout of the building; the structural walls will stay in place. Consequently, any limitations as to the use of the existing space will still exist unless districts want to enhance the budget through more Locally Funded Initiatives. The HVAC, plumbing, finishes, technology, furniture, and other systems will be replaced and/or enhanced to meet OSDM standards; but renovations that drive the cost above the cost of building new will wind up being the expense of district.