



Richard Woods, State School Superintendent

Guideline for Low Wealth Applications

160-5-4-.16 (a) 11

Educational Facility Site, Construction, and Reimbursement

**State Department of Education
Facilities Services Unit**

Amended Date: September 26, 2019

1. Definitions:

Additive Alternate – An alternate bid resulting in an addition to the base bid

Deductive Alternate – An alternate bid resulting in a deduction from the base bid

Advance Funding – interest free loan to be repaid with future entitlement for school systems that meet the minimum requirements specified in 160-5-4-.05.

Change Order – a change to the scope of a construction project after the construction contract has been issued

FTE – (Full Time Equivalent) For this guideline, FTE shall refer to the projected number of students in the local facilities plan as calculated by the Department of Education Facilities Services Unit

Instructional Unit – a classroom or media center as listed in the Guideline for Square Footage Requirements for Educational Facilities

Low Wealth – school systems that have limited ability to generate funds for construction projects and meet the criteria contained within this guideline

New Construction – construction of a new facility or an addition to an existing facility

Project –For this guideline, the project is defined as only the eligible portion of a construction need as identified in the local facilities plan. Costs not eligible for reimbursement with State funds are not included in calculating the total cost of the project. Such costs include but are not limited to site acquisition and preparation.

Prototypical Specifications – a list of design elements and requirements

SPLOST- Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax

2. Low Wealth Criteria

To qualify for a low wealth application, a school system must:

Rank in the bottom 25% in earnings for sales tax revenue per FTE and in the bottom 25% in property wealth per FTE;

Rank in the bottom 25% in earnings for special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST) revenue.

or

Include in the approved Local Facilities Plan (LFP) the intent to consolidate facilities whereby the amount of special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST) over a five-year period would not generate the local contribution necessary to meet the difference between the state eligible cost and the agreed upon state eligible cost in the LFP.

Systems meeting the criteria above may request consideration for a project specific low wealth application when the local portion of the project will exceed five-years of projected SPLOST revenues.

In addition, qualifying for low wealth requires the school system to:

- Currently be levying at least 12 mills (or its equivalent) for maintenance and operations;
- Agree to use prototypical specifications for the project;
- Currently have a SPLOST or be levying millage for debt service on capital projects.

In the event of destruction or damage to an educational facility caused by fire or natural disaster in which the majority of the facility is destroyed or damaged, a local school system which meets the low wealth eligibility criteria of this guideline shall be immediately qualified for and may receive low-wealth capital outlay grants for the concurrent update, repair, or replacement of the portion of the facility that was not destroyed or damaged so long as the facility is 20 years old or older.

3. Required Local Percentage (RLP)

For each whole mill above 12 mills (or its equivalent) for maintenance and operations currently being collected by a school system, there will be a one percent reduction to the RLP. In no case may the RLP for a low wealth project exceed an amount equal to five years of SPLOST revenue.

4. Project Specific Low Wealth Funds

If the local portion of a project will exceed five years of the projected SPLOST revenues, additional state funds will be added to the project to reduce the local portion of the project to five years of projected SPLOST collections.

For new construction projects, the Agreed Upon State Eligible Cost for the project will be

calculated by multiplying the latest appropriate RS Means cost per square foot times the space construction budget identified in the Local Facilities Plan (LFP).

Total eligible State funds for the project will be calculated by subtracting from the State eligible cost an amount equal to five years of the projected SPLOST receipts and any required athletic reduction or necessary chargeback. 6% for architectural fees and 5% for contingencies will be added to the project.

For modification and renovation projects, the State eligible cost will be based on estimates provided by a licensed design professional and approved by the Georgia Department of Education. The total eligible State funds for such projects will be calculated by subtracting from the State eligible cost an amount equal to five years of the projected SPLOST receipts and any required athletic reduction or necessary chargeback. 6% for architectural fees and 15% for contingencies will be added to the project.

5. Prototypical Specifications

To be eligible for a low wealth application, the following prototypical specifications must be given consideration in the design of the project:

New Construction:

- (i) School system personnel and their design professional must meet with Facilities Services Unit staff to review applicable Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) guidelines to ensure a project scope that meets the definition of prototypical specifications. Consideration for space requirements shall be made taking into account student population trends, community demographics, and the manner in which the project will meet the needs of the local community. In growing systems, the core areas may be designed to accommodate future additions. The design should include the locations of possible future additions.

- (ii) The total square footage to be constructed should not be more than ten percent over the total square footage listed on the space construction budget or additions page. This will exclude core areas designed for future expansion. When the project design is proposed to exceed this ten percent variance, a written justification for such a variance shall be provided by the school system.

- (iii) The overall design of the project shall not contain design elements that would greatly affect the construction cost such as excessive porticos, canopies, high ceilings, and the specification of high cost construction materials.

- (iv) Energy efficiency shall be a part of the overall building design.

- (v) The facility or addition shall be designed to reduce upkeep and ongoing maintenance costs.

- (vi) Additive or deductive alternatives or change orders that would cause the design of the project to be out of compliance with the above specifications shall not be permitted.

- (vii) School systems are encouraged to incorporate more efficient and multiple uses of spaces. Examples are multiuse CTAE labs, computer labs incorporated as part of the media center, two science rooms sharing a common science lab space, and common areas designed for multiuse.

- (viii) Fees for external certifications are not eligible for reimbursement.

Roof and HVAC:

Replacement of roof and HVAC must be of similar design to the existing roof and HVAC. Roof replacement shall consist of complete tear off of the existing roof system down to the structural deck with installation of a new roof system of similar design that is capable of receiving a 20-year warranty from the manufacturer.