

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENTS**

### **Q: Where can I find the facility assessment of my school?**

**A:** Reports of facility assessments can be found in two locations on the CPS website, [www.cps.edu](http://www.cps.edu):

1. The first location is a NEW facilities assessment landing page, located on cps.edu at <https://www.cps.edu/services-and-supports/school-facilities/facility-condition-assessment/>. Here you can search for any district-operated school's facility condition assessment. Enter the school name in the search bar and view or download the latest facility condition assessment. Also on this page is the CPS Guide to Biennial Facility Assessments, which provides a more detailed explanation of how assessors ranked different features and how the assessments are conducted
  2. The second is on each school's profile page. Search for any school and visit that school's profile page, locate and click the Downloads tab in the toolbar, scroll down to the area titled "Building". The most recent detailed assessment(s) can be viewed or downloaded.
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### **Q: When were facilities assessed?**

**A:** The Latest facility condition assessments were completed at each district-operated school building (owned/leased) between June 2019 and December 2021. The exact date a particular school was visited can be found in the School Assessment footer at the bottom of the page.

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### **Q: What is the purpose of these assessments?**

**A:** There primary intent of the facility condition assessment is,

1. To record details about the facility and its built-in features & systems such as total building count, overall square footage, count of rooms/spaces, types of building systems (i.e. mechanical, roof, building construction type, air conditioning), etc.
  2. To evaluate all building systems in terms of their condition and recommended service life.
  3. To provide an objective and consistent evaluation of every building
  4. To inform short and long-term capital planning for CPS and serve as the basis for project development and prioritization of future capital projects.
  5. To provide essential data to support other user agencies and CPS departments.
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### **Q: How often does CPS assess each school facility?**

**A:** State law requires CPS to assess each school facility at least once every other year. The date of each assessment can be found in the footer at the bottom of each School Assessment page. The information in the School Assessment is accurate as of the date of the assessment but may have since changed. For example, systems can change significantly from one assessment to another - this can be driven by a number of factors including, weather (freeze/thaw), accelerated deterioration, deferred maintenance, and recent capital/facilities investments.

**Q: Who conducts the assessment of each facility?**

**A:** CPS issues a request for proposals (RFP) for architectural/engineering firms to perform the facility condition assessments. From this competitively bid process, CPS selects and hires a team of experienced building professionals with a range of specialties (e.g., architectural, mechanical, ADA). Each assessment team is required to visit each school campus and record all information into a CPS database. The firms are also required to perform a rigorous quality control review of their data before submitting it to CPS.

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**Q: What is required from the Principal, Engineer & Building Manager?**

**A:**

- The Principal and or assigned representative needs to provide the team with any blackout dates that would not work for the school and officially confirm the dates selected for the onsite assessment.
  - The Building Engineer is **required to complete the “ENGINEER SURVEY”**, ideally prior to the assessment team’s arrival. Once onsite, the building engineer will need to be available to assist the assessment team by providing access to all building spaces (including access to the roof) for all buildings on the campus.
  - The Building Manager may need to coordinate the scheduling with the assessment team for the onsite visits if building engineers are not available.
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**Q: How will the scheduling of the assessment be done? and how long will it take?**

**A:** The assessment team will reach out via email to each school (Principal, Building Engineer, and Building Manager) at least 1-2 weeks in advance of scheduling the assessment visit. The assessment contractor will be responsible for scheduling and coordinating each site visit directly with the school principal, building manager, and engineer. At least 48 hours before the scheduled site visit, the assessment team will follow up by phone with the building engineer (or building manager) to confirm the date and time of the assessment and any additional logistics required on the day of arrival.

On the morning of the assessment, an assessment team of approximately 3-5 professionals will visit the campus, as previously arranged with the school principal and/or building engineer. A complete building assessment generally takes one day for an elementary school and two to three days for a high school. The assessment is a visual inspection only and will not affect classroom learning activities, existing maintenance responsibilities, or upcoming modernization schedules in any way. We realize that these assessments add to your already busy schedule, and our team will work to keep any inconvenience to a minimum. The assessment teams are prepared to accommodate any special circumstances that may arise and will be working very closely with every school to properly schedule and complete the assessment.

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**Q: Have the onsite assessors undergone background checks?**

**A:** Yes, each member of the facility assessment team visiting schools has passed background checks through the formal CPS background check process.

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**Q: Will assessors be taking any COVID safety protocols?**

**A:** Yes, assessors are required to comply with CDC requirements for COVID safety. Each assessor is required to go through a detailed safety checklist that includes COVID safety protocol and completing the CPS Health Screener prior to conducting their visits. They have been instructed to wear masks when in the buildings and practice safe social distancing when around others.

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**Q: How do the assessors rank each facility feature or system?**

**A:** Assessors rate the conditions of features and systems by visual observation. They generally do not test the operability of every feature – for instance, they do not open windows or turn on air conditioners; nor do they break into walls, ceilings, or floors to test or investigate. For information regarding operability or significant problems that cannot be discovered visually, the assessors request that the Building Engineer complete an initial survey, and they interview school Engineers if available at the time of the assessment. Assessors observe and rate the condition of each item or system on a 7-point rating scale: a rank 7 means the item is new or in like-new condition and no work is required while rank 1 means the item has failed and has led to an immediate life safety condition. The remaining ranks generally mean that the item requires regular maintenance (i.e. rank 5 or 6) or full replacement (i.e. rank 2, 3, or 4). To enhance reporting and capital planning analysis, each assessed item must also be assigned a recommended replacement range (used to specify the time span, in years, before replacement is recommended).

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**Q: How can I get more detail on how each of the rankings was determined?**

**A:** For additional detail and definition on rank values as they relate to each assessed item or the recommended replacement range, please visit the "CPS Guide to Biennial Facility Assessments" found on the Facility Condition Assessment webpage at <https://www.cps.edu/services-and-supports/school-facilities/facility-condition-assessment/>.

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**Q: Do the assessments show all of the possible facility-related needs of a school? For instance, do they show whether a school needs a computer lab, or air conditioning, or is missing a playground?**

**A:** No. The assessments are focused only on existing building features and systems. The assessors do not review possible programmatic needs like labs or playgrounds. They assess the condition of any air conditioning systems that already exist in a building and make note of temperature problems, but do not make recommendations about adding air conditioning where it does not currently exist. All of these additional needs are evaluated directly by CPS in its programmatic and capital planning processes.

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**Q: Was The Americans with Disabilities Act considered in these reports?**

**A:** ADA-specific features that already existed in a school building on the date of the assessment – such as elevators, ramps, and platform lifts were assessed with regard to their condition. In addition, an ADA survey was completed at each school for the purpose of collecting information to determine each school's current level of accessibility. The

levels of accessibility that CPS has currently adopted included **Usable, First Floor Usable, and Not Accessible**. Definitions to these terms and school-specific reports can be found at [cps.edu](https://www.cps.edu/services-and-supports/school-facilities/facility-standards/building-accessibility/) on the Building Accessibility webpage. <https://www.cps.edu/services-and-supports/school-facilities/facility-standards/building-accessibility/>

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**Q: When will CPS replace the features with lower rankings?**

**A:** Features that receive the lowest ranking (1) are reported to CPS and repaired or replaced immediately. Features receiving the higher ranks (5-7) either need no work or routine maintenance that is generally implemented by the facilities department on a regular schedule. Other needs (ranks 2-4) are evaluated and prioritized for CPS's multi-year capital improvement program. Many of those features are currently functional and, with ongoing maintenance, can continue to function well into the future, even though the manufacturer's estimated useful life span may have elapsed. Other features are repaired and maintained as necessary until they can be replaced. On an annual basis, CPS reviews all of its district-wide capital needs, and pending available funding recommends those that are in the most urgent need of a replacement.

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**Q: Is there an overall ranking of the condition of each school facility? Could I just average all of the rankings on the summary sheet to create an overall ranking?**

**A:** No. It would not be appropriate to average rankings of different systems, because some systems, and some items within systems, are more critical to the proper functioning of a school facility than others.

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**Q: What if I disagree with some of the findings in the facility condition assessment for my school? What should I do?**

**A:** If you believe that an assessment ranking is in error or that conditions have changed since the time of the assessment, let CPS know by contacting your school principal. If you are a school principal, inform your school engineer and/or Facility/Building Manager, who will work with the CPS assessment team to either correct the information, or note it for the next assessment. If you believe a situation exists that poses an immediate safety concern, contact your school principal or district Lead Facility Manager, or Facility Manager immediately. Each facility will be assessed again in the 2021/22 round of assessments to update any conditions. School principals and engineers will be contacted prior to scheduling each subsequent assessment.

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**Q: How can I get more information about the condition of a CPS facility?**

**A:** If you need information about a CPS school facility that is not included in the School Assessment, contact the CPS Department of Facilities. If you or the principal need more technical guidance, the principal can contact the CPS Department of Facilities at 773-553-2900, where they will be connected with a technical specialist.

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