



Public School Construction Overview

School Security Task Force | August 7, 2023

Public School Construction

Public school construction is largely a local issue. Local education agencies (LEAs – which includes school districts and charter schools) make decisions about school facilities, including when and where to construct new buildings or renovate or reconstruct existing buildings.

While school construction is largely a local issue, there are multiple state, local, and private entities involved in the process. For example: LEAs consult with municipalities on building location and other issues; hire architects and contractors with experience in designing and building schools through the procurement process; comply with the state building code and provide required reporting to DFCM; and clear building plans with the State Fire Marshal.

Other entities that may be involved in the process are listed below.





State Board of Education and Local Education Agencies

Statutes

- [Title 53e, Chapter 3, Part 7](#), School Construction
 - [53E-3-702](#): Requires the board to create detailed guidelines for public school construction, including some of the following:
 - Safety
 - Square footage per student
 - Cost per square foot
 - Minimum and maximum qualities and costs for building materials
- [53G-4-402\(20\)](#): Local school boards must adopt and implement a comprehensive emergency response plan.
- [53G-5-404\(9\)](#): Charter schools must submit any lease, lease purchase agreement, or other contract agreement relating to the charter school's facilities to the school's authorizer.

Administrative Rules

- [R277-471](#), School Construction Oversight, Inspections, Training, and Reporting
 - R277-471-3: LEAs must appoint a School District/Charter School Building Official (SDBO/CSBO). The SDBO and CSBO have direct administrative and operational control of construction, renovation, and inspection of facilities and ensure compliance.
- [R277-400](#), School Facility Emergency and Safety
 - Requires each school to create an emergency preparedness and emergency response plan.

Publications

- [School Construction Resource Manual](#) (2013)
- [Emergency Preparedness Planning Guide for Utah Public Schools](#) (2021)

Division of Facilities Construction and Management

State Construction Code

[Title 15A, Chapter 2](#), Adoption of State Construction Code

Other

- [Design Criteria for the State of Utah](#)
- [DFCM Standard Construction Documents](#)

Prepared by: Micah Ann Wixom, Policy Analyst, mwixom@le.utah.gov