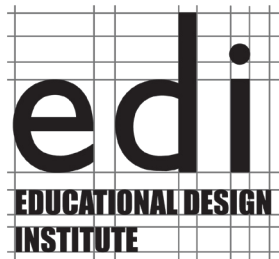


# Mississippi School Design Guidelines



# MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Mississippi School Design Guidelines is a collaborative effort of the Educational Design Institute at Mississippi State University and the Office of Safe and Orderly Schools of the Mississippi Department of Education. This manual contains information for the design, construction, and maintenance of safe and effective K-12 school facilities.





# **Mississippi School Design Guidelines, Third Edition**

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## **Third Edition**

Chris Cosper  
Robert Featherston

## **EDI Director (2011)**

Dr. Glenn McGee

## **Past Project Managers**

Dr. John Garner  
John Poros  
Ryan Hansen  
Brandon Gowen

## **Writers**

William Baker  
Leigh Ann Black  
Brian Conner  
Brandon Gowen  
Ryan Hansen  
Michel Lebel  
Philip Luse  
Donald McKenzie  
John Poros  
Jennifer Rowe  
Elizabeth Trent  
Emily Whetstone

## **Support Operations**

Rhoshunda Cork  
Shannon Martin

## **Layout Design**

Michael Graham  
Ryan Hansen  
Vrushali Palamwar



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# Preface

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The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and Educational Design Institute (EDI) at Mississippi State University have collaborated to write these new school facility guidelines for the State of Mississippi. These guidelines were developed through a collaborative process with 154 participants concerned with the design, construction, and maintenance of school facilities. The guidelines cover a full range of school facility issues, from the planning of new facilities to the maintenance of existing facilities. While not mandatory, these guidelines provide a good, practical guide whether a district is renovating an older building or starting the process of planning a new building.

The Educational Design Institute is a collaborative effort of Mississippi State University's College of Architecture, Art + Design and College of Education. EDI's vision statement says:

The Educational Design Institute, in collaboration with students, parents, educators, school administrators, school boards, and communities, will encourage the creation of safe, accessible, flexible, and developmentally-appropriate learning environments that will help students learn and teachers teach.

## Purpose

The Mississippi School Design Guidelines were developed with several goals in mind:

- a.** To link educational goals and facility design
- b.** To encourage collaborative development of school facilities
- d.** To educate superintendents on school design and construction
- e.** To provide a guide for planning capital improvements

## To Link Educational Goals and Facility Design

For educational facilities to aid in improving the quality of education, the design must support the educational goals of a school. While the educational environment is only one factor in providing a quality education, an unsupportive educational environment can create obstacles and distractions to learning, eroding the quality of instruction. When an environment supports educational goals, that environment goes beyond eliminating obstacles and actually suggests new opportunities for learning.

## To Encourage Collaborative Development of School Facilities

In planning the development of the guidelines, MDE and EDI recognized the need to address diverse issues – not only issues of maintenance, durability, and basic functionality, but also of community use, compatibility to the educational program, and future flexibility. The diversity of these issues required a process that considered many different viewpoints.

The process began with EDI collecting design guidelines from the 43 states that have written guidelines. EDI and MDE then sent invitations to architects, engineers, construction companies, and school districts to participate in a series of workshops to determine the key issues that the guidelines should address.

On June 14, August 30, and October 11, 2000, MDE and EDI held workshops in Jackson, MS, to

get input from organizations and individuals involved in the design and construction of school buildings. Three focus groups were established corresponding to three broad categories of facilities issues: health and safety issues, ambient environmental issues (acoustics, temperature, lighting, etc.), and curriculum-based design factors (size of schools, different learning activities impact on the facility, etc.). The focus groups consisted of ten to fifteen people and included community leaders, engineers, architects, general contractors, building product representatives, school administrators, and representatives from the Department of Education. These groups developed an initial set of guidelines.

A second stage of workshops occurred between October 19 and November 16, 2000. MDE and EDI visited nine school districts, geographically distributed throughout the state, to get the opinion of teachers, administrators, and superintendents on the guidelines as developed and to learn about additional issues important to educators. There were 90 participants at these workshops.

Writing of the guidelines started in January, 2001. In addition to the staff of EDI, architectural students enrolled in an independent study class conducted research for the guidelines. A small advisory group met with the EDI staff to review the progress of the guidelines. When the guidelines were completed, the advisory group reviewed the guidelines again.

Developed collaboratively with the users of the guidelines (school administrators, teachers, architects, and engineers), the MSDG has benefited from real-world experience in the problems and solutions of school design and maintenance.

### **To Educate Superintendents on School Design and Construction**

Superintendents are trained to educate children, not to design a building or supervise a construction project. These guidelines will help school administrators by suggesting the right questions to ask their design and construction professionals, by providing concise, introductory information on issues, and by offering references for further research. Using the guidelines, a school administrator can get a solid start on handling facilities issues and a general overview of school design and planning.

### **To Provide a Guide for Planning Capital Improvements**

For school administrators, planning large capital improvements can be one of the most important projects of their tenure. The MSDG has information on school planning to help school administrators through these large projects. The guidelines cover building size and site selection issues. Non-building issues such as community involvement, the sharing of facilities with other governmental entities, and public use of school facilities are covered as well. By laying out all of the issues involved in school planning, the guidelines are a checklist and reminder of all the possibilities for strategic planning efforts.

# Acknowledgements

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***To be particularly singled out at Safe and Orderly Schools are the following:***

Regina Ginn	Special Assistant to Deputy State Superintendent
Robert Campbell	Director of the Office of Safe and Orderly Schools
Dr. Bill Welch	Director of School Building
Donna Hales	Operations Management Analyst
Tahnya Tremonte	Former Operations Management Analyst

At the Educational Design Institute at Mississippi State University, the Third Edition revision was led by **Chris Cospers**, Assistant Director. Past editions were led by **Dr. John Garner**, former Director; Professor **John Poros**, former Director; and by **Ryan Hansen**, Intern Architect.

***The students who researched and wrote the guidelines for the project were:***

William Baker  
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Vrushali Palamwar  
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