

# Workgroup on Educational Development Specifications

## Minutes of the December 17, 2018 Meeting

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### Members in Attendance:

Robert Gorrell, Executive Director of the IAC – *Workgroup Chair*  
Senator Bill Ferguson  
Senator Jim Rosapepe  
Delegate Mark Chang  
Daniele Haley, Supervisor, Facilities and Capital Planning, Somerset County  
Lisa Seaman-Crawford, Director of Facilities, Anne Arundel County  
Cynthia Smith, Director of Facilities Design and Construction, Baltimore City  
Bob Wilkinson, Director of Maintenance and Operations, Frederick County  
Brian Gibbons, Developer, IAC Member, Knott Commissioner  
Dick Lombardo, Builder, IAC Member  
Chris Parts, Architect, AIA Committee on Architecture for Education  
Kathleen Sherrill, Architect, Knott Commissioner

### Members Not in Attendance:

Delegate Jeff Ghrist

### Call to Order

The second meeting of the Workgroup on Educational Development Specifications was called to order at 9:16 a.m.

### Meeting Recording

Due to technical difficulties, the live stream and archived recording of the meeting does not include audio for the first portion of the meeting. Audio became available at about 10:45 a.m. The minutes below serve as the official record for the missing audio portion of the meeting. Please review the archived video, available at [iac.maryland.gov](http://iac.maryland.gov), for an official record of the remainder of the meeting.

### Discussion of HB 1783 Charges I and III – MSDE Facilities Design Standards and Guidelines and IAC Square Footage Allocations/Maximum Gross Area Allowances (MGAAs), respectively

Workgroup Chair Robert Gorrell opened the meeting by setting some context, noting that while more than nine out of ten Americans say schools should be updated/improved, about half oppose new or increased taxes to accomplish the task. After that introduction – and with a reminder that MSDE’s guidelines represent guidance, rather than requirements – Alex Donahue, Manager of Special Projects for the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC), and Fred Mason, Chief of the School Facilities Branch of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), presented two of five topics related to the Workgroup’s legislative charges, as outlined in a discussion guide.



That guide, titled **HB 1783 Charges to the Ed Specs Workgroup**, combined Legislative Charges #1, “MSDE Facilities Design Standards and Guidelines,” and #3, “IAC Square Footage Allocations/Maximum Gross Area Allowances,” because they’re intrinsically linked, with similar issues and recommendations for the Workgroup’s consideration.

Mr. Donahue and Mr. Mason reviewed key issues, potential solutions, pros and cons, and staff recommendations for the Workgroup’s consideration. Members discussed the mismatch between MSDE’s Facilities Guidelines and the IAC’s Square Footage Allocations/Maximum Gross Area Allowances (MGAAs), raising such questions as: 1) How are projects treated at existing schools that need renovations and/or additional space; and 2) Were portable classrooms included in data used to determine draft State Funding Participation Baselines? IAC staff answered “no” to the latter, while the first question prompted a more nuanced response, as follows.

**Total Cost of Ownership.** In a brief explanation of “first-costs” of construction vs. “long-term costs of ownership,” Mr. Gorrell noted an important distinction: While the State does not participate in overbuilding facilities when allocating (first-cost) dollars for a major renovation, replacement, or new construction, State dollars for systemic projects – such as a new heating system – that make up the *total cost of ownership* are not limited to eligible square footage.

Workgroup members asked IAC staff to investigate whether it’s feasible for the State to limit its participation in systemic renovations to the level of state funding at the time of original construction.

Workgroup members discussed MSDE guidelines and a public perception that they are requirements, as well as the potential for that perception to drive additional square footage and cost. The ensuing discussion focused on the use of resource spaces and community spaces in schools, such as small group rooms that are used for conflict resolution or special activities. Senator Rosapepe asked staff to compile and share with the Workgroup any legislative or regulatory language that requiring schools to provide specific spaces.

Workgroup members discussed the possible additional space needs related to the growing number of special needs kids in public schools.

Staff highlighted their proposal to convert the Maximum Gross Area Allowances MGAAs the IAC currently uses into default baselines. The key to questions about school size, Mr. Donahue said, is for the State to support educational effectiveness for widely varying populations while also recognizing feasibility/sustainability. The alternative – of no State influence on facility size – could create problems, from rising total costs of ownership for facilities built larger than necessary to the potential for inequity due to varying levels of LEA fiscal capacity.

**Incentives and Best Practices.** The Workgroup talked about finding ways to reward efficiency, flexibility, and sustainability in school facilities programs. In addition to incentivizing LEAs to design and build schools that are not over-sized and can adapt to future needs, members discussed ways to reward good maintenance practices.

**Recommendations on Charges #1 and #3.** Gorrell summarized IAC staff recommendations related to space as follows:

- Convert MGAs into State Funding Participation Baselines that describe the default outer boundaries of size for State participating in funding, while allowing the IAC to grant variances as appropriate;
- Develop incentives to encourage good decision-making.

Mr. Gorrell highlighted the role of the Funding Workgroup, which will begin meeting in 2019 to consider funding questions that could include incentives to encourage best practices. Along those lines, Senator Rosapepe raised the idea of developing a “databank” of school design ideas that work.

Lisa Seaman-Crawford, Anne Arundel County’s Director of Facilities, said she wants to make sure the Workgroup considers the Kirwan Commission’s work and any consensus on facilities’ issues. Senator Bill Ferguson pointed to pre-K and early childhood spaces, teachers’ lounges for classroom planning, and the need for space for career pathway programs with apprenticeships. The Kirwan Commission has also focused on maintenance dollars, he said, with lower-income jurisdictions being the most highly strained.

### **Workgroup Break**

After a break, the Workgroup returned to its deliberations at about 10:45 a.m. The audio of the live stream is available [here](#) at the 1:51:30 mark for the remainder of the meeting.