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**Planning a School Facility Project?**

**Test your Knowledge**

You have your own experiences with home buying, office space rentals, interior design, etc. that will influence how you approach a facility project. While some of this might be helpful, some of it might misguide you, or worse derail you. The risks can range from late surprises with budgets to missed chances for innovation. To help you turn on your radar for false assumptions, try this true/false quiz.

**Quiz**

1. A developer will cover all upfront costs for a facility project. True / False
2. All school facilities are Design-Build projects. True / False
3. A school facility is usually $250-$350/SF. True / False
4. Renovating a building is less expensive than new construction. True / False
5. After signing a GMP, there won’t be any change orders. True / False
6. Architects design to standard enrollment projection trends. True / False
7. Cost estimators provide comprehensive benchmarking information. True / False
8. Zoning allows schools to be built anywhere. True / False
9. School HVAC systems are the same as office HVAC systems. True / False
10. Utility companies prioritize services to schools True / False
11. Buying school furniture is usually less than $2,000/student. True / False
12. Having a gymnasium doesn’t impact the size of the school parking lot. True / False

**Your Score: <?> See next page for discussion**

A common misconception is that school facilities are somewhat generic. Instead, they are a combination of unique design from the owner’s perspective, while at the same time, being treated like any other development projects from the permitting agencies and utility companies.

Curious about the quiz topics?

1. While it is possible that a developer would offer to cover all upfront costs, it is not common and it will increase the overall cost of the project as you pay them back later with either interest or a high fee for taking on the risk. Sharing in upfront costs is a common way of sharing risk, affirming the partnership, and basically ‘having skin in the game.’ It is also likely that you will have incurred costs before you are ready to decide if you want to work with a developer.
2. Schools are built using the full range of delivery methods including Design-Build, Design-Bid-Build, and Construction Manager at Risk. Similarly, the range of construction contract types include Stipulated Sum, Guaranteed Maximum Price, and Cost Plus.
3. The construction cost and the total project cost (with everything else on top of construction) varies widely by size of school, complexity of the site, schedule of the project, occupied or unoccupied construction, and jurisdictional requirements.
4. Renovations add multiple complexities to a project such as modernizing HVAC systems within confined spaces, removing hazardous materials, and incorporating accessibility elements (which can include excavating for a new elevator pit!)
5. While a ‘Guaranteed Maximum Price’ (GMP) sounds like a cap on what you’ll have to pay, it isn’t. All of your partners will be diligent, but there will inevitably be situations where the drawings aren’t absolutely perfect (because that would take forever to do), the builder finds something underground, and market conditions drive up prices for key materials. These kinds of costs would all be outside of the ‘guarantee.’
6. Each school is responsible for its own enrollment priorities and forecasting, and will need to provide guidance to the architect.
7. Cost estimators can provide valuable comparison data on the hard costs of past projects that may be comparable to your vision. It is not the same as understanding if projects are comparable for risk management, construction contract type, sustainability requirements, local purchasing requirements, quality of finishes, timeline for design, infrastructure, etc.
8. Land use attorneys and zoning administrators are key partners for understanding how the ordinances in your specific jurisdiction address educational facilities.
9. Many jurisdictions have targeted requirements for the amount of ‘fresh’ air circulating in educational facilities, related to the number of students in a classroom.
10. The structures of publicly held and privately held utility services companies vary widely, and have their own systems for processing design, installation, activation requests, along with related fees.
11. Furnishing a school goes beyond chair and desks per student, but includes significant technology investments, business and operations items, and maintenance and janitorial equipment.
12. In many zoning ordinances, a gymnasium is considered an ‘assembly’ space, which triggers requirements for accommodating large crowds. This can impact your transportation plan.