Checklist: Renovate an Existing School or Build a New School

The answer to this key question is not clear and simple, and it requires a detailed and time-consuming analysis of many factors. Through the review and comment process, the commissioner must consider both the economic and the educational advisability of a proposed school construction project; hence, both an economic and education perspective on what is best educationally for students and economically for taxpayers of the community and the state are necessary.

The more "yes" answers there are to the following questions, the greater the likelihood that a school facility in its entirety is not adequate for current student, staff, program and community needs and needs to be replaced:

	Question	Response		
		Yes	No	Maybe
1	Does the school district have too many school facilities for the numbers of students?			
2	Are there student safety issues (e.g. student and bus drop-off) on the school site?			
3	Is the school site too small to meet current needs for parking and outdoor activities?			
4	Is it very difficult or impossible to solve school site issues by closing streets and/or purchasing adjacent properties?			
5	Are their major exterior issues such as leaking roofs, groundwater penetration, sagging walls, mold and brick in need of repair or replacement?			
6	Are major portions of the school greater than 50 years old and/or in poor condition?			
7	Are there many additions to the school over the years, and are learning and support spaces separated that should be clustered together?			
8	Are major portions of the school inaccessible to students with disabilities and adults?			

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The more "yes" answers there are to the following questions, the greater the likelihood that a school facility in its entirety is not adequate for current student, staff, program and community needs and needs to be replaced:

	Question	Response		
		Yes	No	Maybe
9	Does the school have indoor health and safety issues such as poor indoor air quality, fire safety and mold?			
10	Does the school have mold, asbestos, water penetration or other issues behind exterior or interior surfaces; the cost of which to repair or replace is difficult to estimate without special engineering studies?			
11	Are general classrooms, specialized areas (labs, shops, music, art, physical education and special education), multiple-purpose areas, and support spaces (e.g. storage, conference spaces) insufficient for current needs?			
12	Are there many load-bearing walls, wood floors, and other design features that make renovation of the school difficult and expensive?			
13	Are the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and heating, ventilation, air-conditioning systems in poor condition?			
14	Is lighting insufficient and/or do the windows, ceilings and walls need replacement?			
15	Is further wiring for technology costly because of the age and/or design of the school?			
16	Is the student enrollment either too small or too large for the capacity of the facility?			
17	Are school operational and maintenance costs high?			

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	Question	Response		
		Yes	No	Maybe
18	Are community use spaces in the school few or insufficient for current needs?			
19	Are the high costs of renovating the school, the unpredictability of renovation costs, and the disadvantages of continuing to use it as a school clear and understandable?			
20	Are the concerns of supporters of the school centered on issues other than how the facility can best improve student learning and teaching, and help prepare students for their future?			
21	Does the school have good potential for reuse? Is there a viable reuse option for the school?			
22	Are the reasons for replacing the school and the advantages of building a new school clear and understandable?			
23	Does the school district have the bonding capacity to build a new school?			
24	Will the school likely be serving students for the life of the bond issue?			

* Note: Questions and information is from Part 2.06 (pages 51 & 52) of the Minnesota Department of Education Guide for planning school construction projects in Minnesota.